

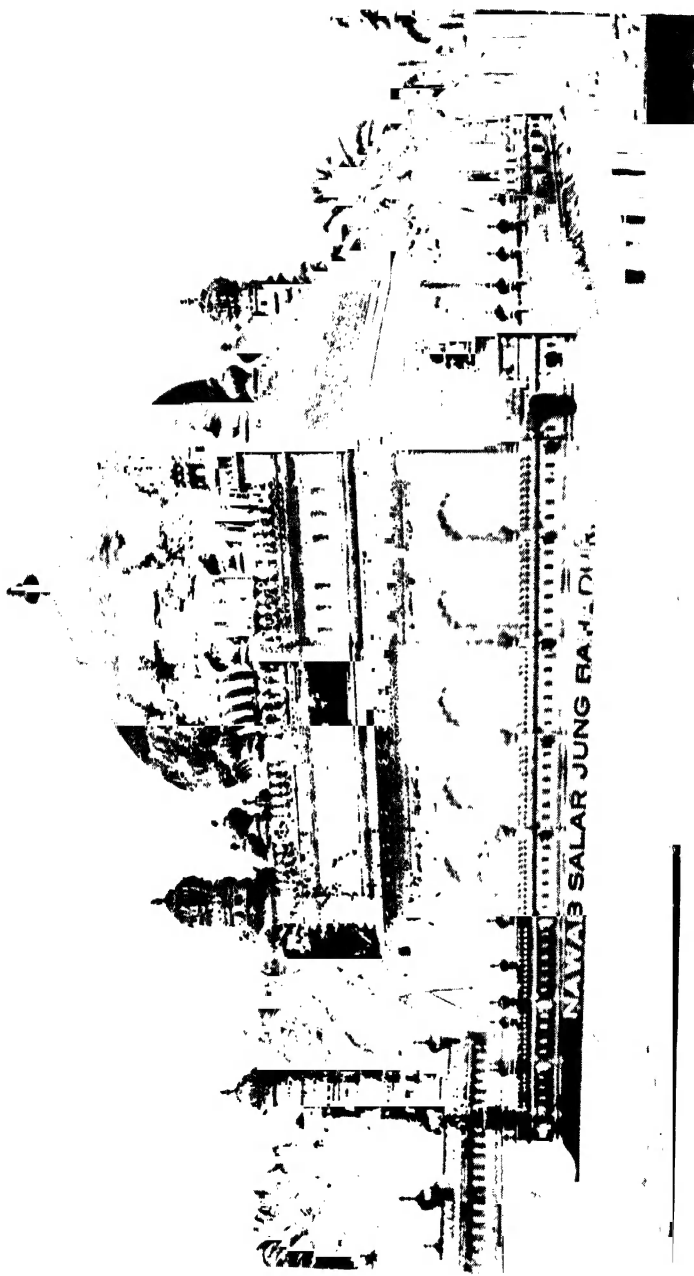


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# MYSTERIOUS INDIA





TOMB OF TIPPU SULTAN, SERINGAPATAM

# MYSTERIOUS INDIA

*by*

MOKI SINGH

*With 15 Half-tone Illustrations*

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# MYSTERIOUS INDIA

## CHAPTER I

### THE CAULDRON OF INDIA

**T**HE cauldron that is India simmers day and night, year by year, warmed by the fierce fires of warring religions, superstitions, illiteracy, and perverted truth.

A cauldron needs careful watching. Too much fuel and it seethes. A little more fuel, a stir or two, and the ingredients that go to make up the mixture rise in a struggling mass, fight with each other—and overflow.

So with the India that is the painted scene of travel boo's, the land of the incredible Taj Mahal, rugged splendour of Frontier hills, the stately pomp of official New Delhi. It is the land of wonders, the picture book of the 'romantic orient,' the mysterious intoxicating land where the village maiden (too often 'Untouchable!') draws water from the well just as did Rebecca in Biblical days.

But India is not all a travel book. The picture has another side, not so distinct. In parts the colour has been splashed on in vivid strokes. In others there is just a dim background telling of nothing. It is a distorted picture as if the painter had understood but little of the hidden India.

Now look beyond the veil that shrouds its secrets, its mysteries.



## MYSTERIOUS INDIA

Before Britain was born, Aryans migrating from their homes in south-west Asia struggled eastward across the parched deserts of Persia and Afghanistan, streamed through the Khyber Pass and settled in India.

At that time India was inhabited by the Dravidians, a primitive, aboriginal race, with an animist religion and simple ways of living. As a type, the Dravidians were vastly inferior to the Aryans. Children of the steamy heat and rains, they found no difficulty in supporting their daily needs, and were consequently lazy. Backward in their way of life, in their beliefs, ignorant and lacking in organization, they fell victims to the needs of an expanding people.

For the first time in her history, India let the white man in.

The Aryans settled down on the lush plains and valleys of India. But to keep the white blood pure, to overcome the dangers of miscegenation, they brought into practice the system which to-day is known as caste, and which, so useful in those ancient days, has now become a curse to the masses. Dravidians, and the children of marriages between the Aryans and the Dravidians, were declared low caste. The remaining people were divided into three rough castes. At the top of the system were the Brahmins, the priestly section. Next came the Kshatriya caste, the soldiers, military leaders, and thirdly the Vaisyas, ordinary folk of the cultivator and small-trader class. Below them were the Sudras, the products of miscegenation, and those Dravidians who embraced the Hindu religion. The Sudras were regarded as 'untouchables.'

As years went by the castes became confused and subsections of the original three castes became intermingled. To-day a Brahmin may be a merchant, a cultivator, a beggar, a chair-porter, or even a

soldier ; from the religious angle, however, he remains completely superior.

The form of society which the Aryan conquerors set up gradually became crystallized. It took on other aspects. The pure Hindu religion became mixed with the original native religions, so that in different parts of India, while the underlying idea of Hinduism remained, it took on local colour. By degrees it became over-ornate, until the life had gone from it, its sway over the people was diminishing, and it was decaying from the roots.

The time had come for a new religion, which arose in the form of Gautama the Buddha, who, because of the decadence of Hinduism, found that his simple teaching helped and inspired the people. The torch of Buddhism swept through India, converting millions to a simple way of life. Hinduism, and its emphasis on the Brahmins and the caste system, was swamped beneath the waves of a more vital faith. In spite of the Buddha's teachings, caste remained. A thousand years later, when the waves of Buddhism began to recede, the Brahmins emerged once more, bedraggled but triumphant. Caste again became set, as rigidly as it had been before the teachings of the Buddha. . . . Other religions sought to overthrow it but they never captured the mind of the people of India as Buddhism had done.

It was not until the Moslems poured down through the Khyber Pass, just as the Aryans had done centuries earlier, that Hinduism was faced with yet another superior force.

With the drum's ecclesiastic throbbing, the fierce cries of "Glory for all and Heaven for those who bleed," the war-like tribesmen of the west, the Tartars, Afghans, and Pathans, descended from the Frontier hills.

Here is a savage story of fear penetrating an

already age-old India, of rival factions, quarrelling, lands being divided and re-divided, of a hated conqueror ruling the masses whom he had defeated. Outwardly, at any rate, India was crushed under the Islamic heel.

So through centuries to the times of the great Mogul Dynasty, when the whole of India came under the sway of the great Mohammedan emperors at Delhi. Later the administration of the north weakened with the threats of the Hindu chiefs. Gradually it became demoralized until the Mogul Empire was no longer an empire and India was a hot-bed of rival factions, each struggling for power.

Into this maelstrom of fear and hatred plunged the Portuguese, to be followed by the French and the British. Needless to recall how Britain finally vanquished the French and how they suppressed the rising of the Marathas, and every other power that rose against them. It is enough that the Union Jack now flies from the Government buildings at New Delhi and Simla.

It has been seen how different races invaded India, how one after another they set up their different forms of customs, castes, religions, and superstitions. The Indian people had been torn between the creeds of the all-powerful Brahmin, the Moslem—for so many years recognized ruler of India—the Buddhist, the Sikh, the Jain, the primitive Animist, and lately the Christian.

This has left an indelible mark on India. Hinduism, which is still strong, has many things to answer for. Perhaps its most amazing aspect is that the religion should have hardened into a mould which, through the centuries, has remained essentially the same. For countless years it has divided people into groups, so that they are unable to marry outside them, so that no one from the lowest rank may rise to a higher one.

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The great mass of the people are still so primitive that the most terrible deeds are perpetrated in the name of religion. Human sacrifices are still said to be carried out to appease Mother Kali. . . . Witchcraft, any villager will tell you, is a danger that still threatens. It is reported that sixteen murders due to witchcraft were actually committed in the state of Bihar and Orissa in 1931 alone.

The following story shows how prevalent is this belief in witchcraft. It is taken from *The Underworld of India*. The action occurred in Central India in 1929.

A certain woman 'was believed by her husband to be possessed of an evil spirit, and she was taken by him to another woman said to be possessed by a worse and stronger spirit. The two spirits then wrestled in fierce and repeated contests. The stronger spirit demanded the sacrifice of four fowls and two kids, which the two women, standing up to their waists in water, bit to death. The woman was then declared free and husband and wife returned home. Hardly had they got there when the other woman sends to recall them saying that she is attacked by Mussamat Gouri's evicted spirit. They return and there is a terrible quarrel after dark, the other woman strips all Mussamat Gouri's clothes from her, and tries to burn both of them. The husband of the latter woman, terrified out of any manliness, escapes and climbs a tree where he remains till the morning. Coming down at daylight in fear and trembling, he then descends to find his wife dead, with burns on her body and a hole in her abdomen. It is found that all her viscera have been torn out and apparently burnt. The other woman affects complete ignorance. She is, however, found guilty of the murder and transported for life.'

Unrest within so vast a country, which till the advent of the British was almost devoid of communi-

cations, is not the recipe for a happy and prosperous state. Add to that the credulity of a backward people and you have the happy hunting-ground of the criminal. In fact it was these conditions, coupled with the laws of caste, that helped to breed men whose whole-time or part-time profession is dacoity, robbery and murder.

Murder was looked upon by some politically minded Indians as the test of a man's courage. They considered him a weakling unless he robbed and killed, and some time ago a tragic instance of this 'murder for glory' creed came to light.

A young Indian was about to marry a girl whom he loved very dearly. But something must have worried the bridegroom-to-be about her attitude towards him. Perhaps he felt that he could demand no respect from her until he had, in some way, shown his courage. So he promptly went out, picked a quarrel with a man he met in the street and killed him.

His bride-to-be was delighted at this sign of her husband's strength and prowess—but not when she heard that he had been arrested, and later, that he had been executed. She pleaded for his life, but murder is not a thing that strikes a magistrate as funny, or a passing whim that can be excused and left at that.

There is also the type of man who carries on an innocent trade for part of the year, and then disappears for his 'holidays' on a robbing expedition, aided and abetted by his friends.

Crime to these men does not have the meaning that we Westerners attach to it. They are descendants of men who long ago found out that living on the credulity of others was a far more profitable vocation than striving day by day on a piece of earth to earn a miserable subsistence. Accordingly, well bolstered by some fancy religion which fitted the

demands of their consciences, they embarked on their career of robbery, robbery with violence, and murder.

It must be admitted that the gods and goddesses were extraordinarily helpful to them. They gave absolutely cast-iron excuses for murder, and, of course, robbery could be similarly excused. The Goddess Kali might be mentioned as the chief help-mate. Her cry : " Main booki hun ! Main booki hun ! " (I am hungry ! I am hungry !) proved an adaptable saying, which the sedulous crooks would answer in the devoted terms :

" Kali ma ki jai ! " (Victory to Mother Kali !)

These men usually fall into the category of 'Dacoits.' (People who rob, with or without violence—sometimes with murder.) For a whole year, perhaps, they lie quiet, peacefully pursuing an honest occupation in some small town. Their neighbours are their accomplices, and when these men feel the urge to rob and pillage upon them—or perhaps they have more mercenary reasons—they leave town quietly. One of the men, the bravest and most audacious, is chosen as leader, and after the band has travelled many miles across India he decides the time is ripe for some remunerative jollity to mix with the dreariness of their journey.

What is it to be ? A sudden raid upon a sleeping village ? The ambush of a few footsore travellers ? The kidnapping of a wealthy man or his wife ?

Maybe the first course is suggested by the leader. Nothing like a sudden *coup* upon a sleepy village to liven up the spirits.

The collection of mud huts that make up the Indian village lies nestling in the cleft of a hill. Night has fallen and a tranquil peace reigns over the dormant scene. The sleep of the labourer who tends the fields and makes a happy, if meagre, living by his work is spread like a panoply over the

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roofs of those humble huts. Everything sleeps except the policeman, who walks slowly and 'deeply contemplative' along the rough foot-made road.

From a vantage point in the overlooking hills the robbers wait with eyes like vultures watching the last death spasms of a man. . . . A muffled whisper from the leader, and the others move off to take up positions so that the village is completely encircled. A signal from the leader and the band moves in stealthily. Unheard the leader moves up behind the policeman, seizes him round the mouth and waist, bears him silently to the ground. Something glints in the faint light—is buried in the policeman's body. . . .

At the same time the rest of the gang has crept silently into the huts. A few screams are heard, but the robbers with repeated threats succeed in terrorizing the villagers into submission to their commands. The huts are rifled of their belongings while the villagers are driven out into the roadway and there assembled, dazed and trembling, under the eyes and weapons of five robbers who have been given the task of watching them.

But the leader is not satisfied. The haul has been exceedingly poor, worse than his most pessimistic expectations. Although the gang has looked in every corner, they have failed to find anything except a few common and worthless pieces of frippery. The village must possess more valuables than these.

A woman may now be dragged from the crowd of villagers, cowed and submissive. She is asked where her husband keeps his wealth. There is no answer, just terror in her eyes. Two men seize her brutally, drag her screaming to the ground. Her husband, standing in the crowd of obedient villagers, rushes forward horror-stricken at the thought of his wife's fate. Two guards seize hold of him and throw him back again into the mob.

" Tell them where it is ! Tell them where it is ! " he screams hysterically.

His wife, winded and bruised by the savage way in which the guards threw her to the ground, gasps out painfully the secret hiding-place of their life savings, of the money and valuables they have saved between them, her husband by his incessant toiling in the fields, and she by her stinting, saving, and scraping in the house.

Her directions are finished. The robbers appear satisfied, and one is detailed to make a search and find out whether the woman has been truthful. He disappears inside a hut and later emerges to say the woman has not lied. Everything is there.

The rest of the villagers are similarly obliged to divulge the hiding-places of their all. One by one they tell, and soon a heap of treasures is lying on the ground.

Avariciously the robbers stuff the village wealth into bags, pockets, anything so long as they can take it all away. One of the villagers is given the honour of carrying some of the loot for the robbers, and he is likewise appreciated as being a useful hostage.

So the robbers take leave of the village with sardonic farewells, while the villagers watch helplessly as the *cortège* moves off down the street. The first rays of the sun silhouette the *cortège* as it vanishes over the crest of the hill. Then the spell of silence is broken, the village becomes a babble of tongues. Wails and bitter words break forth.

Dacoity is a common crime in India. These sudden descents on villages happen periodically. They do not form one part of a sensation. They are the illegitimate offspring of the tumultuous history of India. Great efforts have, and are, being made by the English officers to stamp out Dacoity, and they have proved successful. The number of such crimes is down to a far lower level than was usual not many years ago.



There is one bright and glorious record in the annals of British crime suppression in India. This is the total and absolute wiping out of Thuggee, due particularly to the efforts of a very courageous, patient, and invincible man. This man was Colonel Sleeman.

Thuggee may be described as the systematic slaughter of fellow citizens by a select and religious band of murder maniacs.

For hundreds of years there had existed in India a fraternity of murderers who, because of the secrecy of its methods, the fidelity of its followers, and the vastness and unrest of the country, remained unsuspected.

A husband would say good-bye to his wife before leaving on a long journey, telling her to remain faithful to him while he was away. His loving wife would tease him of being jealous, and so they would part. Little did she guess that her husband would never return, or even after years had passed by and still he was away that a secret band of murderers had taken his life.

She might think that he had been taken prisoner by some powerful lord, that he had fallen a prey to a tiger or panther, or had suffered any other fate of the traveller in a vast, wild land lacking in communications. But that he had fallen foul of a gang of secret murderers? Impossible. It was literally unbelievable.

Thuggee's deadly tentacles enmeshed the whole of India, and for centuries Thugs pursued their insidious profession without the slightest hindrance. During that time thousands of the people of India disappeared—never to be seen again.

It was not until Dr. Sherwood wrote a paper for the *Literary Journal* of Madras in 1816 that the idea of a widespread gang of Thugs existing in India was heeded.

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Then, as the news travelled across the country, panic seized the people, who remembered the days when someone near and dear to them had journeyed off never to return. Terror gripped the countryside.

The crusade against Thuggee began in 1830. The Government had been collecting and sifting information for many years past, and by that time they were convinced that there was a deadly secret organization.

From the start, Colonel Sleeman was a leader of the investigation into Thuggee. Suspects were rounded up and soon one, named Feringhea, told all. Colonel Sleeman could hardly believe his ears, let alone the Thug. The most amazing stories of wholesale murder of highway travellers were revealed to him.

It seemed that the most revolting and callous crimes had been perpetrated under his nose without a whisper or a sign from anyone. It was so astounding that he told Feringhea to give him some proof of the facts that he had said were true.

Feringhea then led them out of the town until they reached a lonely spot. Here he knelt down.

"Dig here," he said. "You will find all the proof you need." The Thug's face took on an expression of pride.

Hastily the party set about digging at the spot indicated by Feringhea. Soon they unearthed the bodies of several men who had obviously been dead for some months.

Colonel Sleeman needed no further confirmation of his fears and doubts. Here was the terrible, tragic proof that Feringhea had not under-estimated his statements.

So started the campaign against Thuggee. It was only now, after centuries had rolled by, that steps were being taken to stop these mass-murderers.

Surprising, no doubt, but the Thugs were a religious body. Thuggee is another case of using religion to cover what is morally wrong. Before they started out on their murder expeditions the Thugs, who were probably just the same type of person as the Dacoits previously mentioned (small traders and the like) would consult omens. If these were favourable, that is, if Bhowani (another form of Kali), the goddess to whom they were consecrated, sanctioned their expedition—dedicated to her honour and prestige—they would anoint the burial pick-axe and venture off in search of suitable travellers to kill, for the benefit of their own pockets and, of course, the everlasting appetite of the voracious Bhowani.

After journeying for a few days they would, with luck, fall in with some rich merchant and his friends. The Thugs would explain that they were poor travellers and needed the protection of a rich man and his escort. The merchant would grudgingly give his orders that the men might be allowed to stay with his caravan. With witty talk and small favours, by wheedling and flattering, the Thugs would gradually win the hearts and confidence of their fellow travellers. If they found that the travellers were on a long journey, this was very acceptable news.

The time came when the leader of the Thugs decided that it was convenient to carry out the *coup de grâce*. Then the *bhurtotes* (stranglers), at a signal from the leader, fell in behind their fellow travellers. A pre-arranged signal—*ruhmals* fluttered over the heads of the travellers, fell round their necks—a deft twist and the job was done.

Hastily the *lughas* (buriers) of dead dug the graves. Meanwhile the *shumseeas* (holders of limbs) arranged the dead men, while the *bhurtotes* dislocated their knees so as to be able to pack the bodies into as small a space as possible.

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The pockets of the dead were rifled and everything of value taken. Half an hour before a party of unsuspecting travellers had been tramping along the highway thinking of their homes, two days' march ahead. Thirty short minutes pass and their bodies, dead, broken, robbed, are buried below three feet of Indian soil.

The Thugs have good reason to be happy, for the travellers have rewarded them for their pains. They assemble and give their thanks to Bhowani for the success of their mission. Then they eat a consecrated communion supper of unrefined sugar, well content that both they and Mother Bhowani are satisfied.

The Thugs, although pursuing their profession in gangs, must not be supposed to be entirely isolated from their fellows in other gangs. In fact, the unity of the Thugs was remarkable, for never had their secrets been betrayed—until Colonel Sleeman began his investigations.

They were strange, perverted men, these Thugs. Sworn in allegiance to Bhowani, and to themselves for the common good, they were hereditary criminals. A Thug's son would not know of his father's secret profession until he was of a suitable age to be initiated into it himself. Then he would be told, little by little. Sometimes the son liked the idea, for it must be remembered that he would be brought up to worship Mother Kali and Bhowani. Other sons revolted at the idea of becoming assassins in this gruesome and horrible trade. There are stories of Thugs' sons who, on learning of their fathers' secret craft, declined to take it on. In their cases it was deemed unwise that a boy should know so much of India's secret menace. So the fathers disposed of them, quietly.

Thuggee was an easy way of making money for callous men. These men were not amateurs. In

fact, Thuggee was absolutely exclusive to professionals. Before taking the positions of honour—the positions of *bhurtotes*—the would-be Thugs had to go through a period of extensive training. If he was the son of Thug, the young aspirant would be called upon first as a scout, then a burier of dead, then a holder of the body, and, last, a full-blown strangler.

There were reasons for this systematic training. There was no room for a 'bungler' at the job, and a young Thug might be nauseated at the thought of his first strangling. So he gradually worked up to that position after long years of training with his father, or whoever was good enough to teach him the job.

There is no doubt that the Thugs took a delight in killing their prey. The ecstasy with which a Thug with over nine hundred murders to his credit recounted his adventures, left no doubt of that. Perhaps the horrible cult of Bhowani is to blame for these terrible acts of murder. Bhowani, however many people were killed, never seemed satisfied. On a young mind, she would impress the utter disregard for human life and the glory and honour that a murder in her name would bring. In fact, she was directly instrumental in manufacturing sadists of the most awful types.

Within the village or town where the Thugs carried on their honest occupations, their strange periodical disappearances would sometimes evoke comments from the officials. Naturally a gang of men disappearing for months at a time with feeble excuses, which on investigation proved faked, was a suspicious occurrence. Although the Thugs would never disclose their true occupation while away, they took good care to bribe the officials.

It was the habit of the Thugs, as true Raffelian crooks, to spare women and children whenever it was possible, for many travellers took their wives and children with them.

Some excuse could usually be arranged to send all but the men back before the orgy started. Perhaps the Thugs, who were being 'protected' by the rich merchant, had learnt that there was trouble ahead in some form, or persuaded the merchant and his friends that, for excellent reasons, they would not need their wives in the town to which they were fast approaching. So with a suitable escort the wives and children would be packed off to their homes, miles away, never to hear from, or see, their husbands and fathers again.

But sometimes it so happened that it was unavoidable that women and children should be present at the critical moment. The older women would be dealt with in the same manner as the men. But if there were any young and beautiful women, and any children who looked like becoming efficient Thugs, they were spared.

One pathetic story is told of a young and recently married couple who were upon a journey of some considerable distance with their friends. Some poor but extremely innocent-looking travellers had fallen in with them on the way. They were such harmless creatures, so pleasing both in conversation and in the small favours they periodically bestowed, that after a few days they were accepted as members of the party.

But a surprise came one day when the beautiful young wife looked round for her husband, to discover that he was receiving medical treatment from two of the poor travellers that had joined them.

Retracing her steps, she found that one of them was tending his neck, while the other was putting his limbs into neat and methodical order.

"What has happened to him?" she asked, her face showing extreme consternation.

The traveller who was tending the husband's neck looked up, giving her a sly glance.

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There was no need to ask any more questions. Her husband had been murdered.

The shock of seeing her husband lying there purple-faced, eyes lolling, tongue rolling loosely from his mouth, sent her into a maniacal, grotesque laughter.

Screaming, she staggered up and down the road, holding her head between her hands.

The leader of the Thugs, who had been watching the pretty young wife with covetous eyes for days, came up to her.

He attempted to pacify her, entreated her to stop screaming like a singer he had once heard in Calcutta. He told her that he wanted to marry her and that he would make a far better husband—and a far braver one—than her lamented husband.

But what the Thug failed to realize with the indifference that a hundred such murders had brought with them was that the young wife could be passionately devoted to the man who had become another offering to Bhowani.

No matter how much he would have liked her to become his wife, and much as he tried to make her listen to reason, she still continued to scream.

Uneasiness came upon the Thug. His scouts had reported that there was nobody within ten miles of the place, but he was taking no risks. His cherished thoughts of making this beautiful girl his own vanished; personal emotions must be subordinated to safety. With a quick motion he threw the *ruhmāl* over the girl's head and with a deft twist ensured that her screams would no longer echo across the surrounding country-side.

Between 1831 and 1837, 1772 Thugs were dealt with and 412 of them were hanged. It has been estimated that many thousands of people perished annually from the dire results of India's secret menace.

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A few years later Thuggee was just a nightmare of the past, so successfully had it been suppressed by the untiring efforts of Colonel Sleeman and others.

India, by breeding a hereditary criminal class, has also bred a class more clever, more far-sighted than Thugs. The crimes recorded previously in this chapter are the efforts of ordinary, unscrupulous Indian criminals.

But another type of criminal exists in India, a malcontented, sour, self-seeking, trouble-stirrer.

He is a certain type of wealthy business man, who not content with the prosperity that British rule has brought with it, is ever seeking more of this world's goods. He is the pernicious mischief maker who inflames Indian students, townspeople, and country-folk into anarchical revolts, frequently or infrequently as he chooses. He is the man who controls rackets that would turn a Chicago bootlegger's heart to ice, and his hand towards the butt of his gun.

With the hot-headedness of Indian students to work on, with the credulity and superstition of the Indian masses guaranteed, what clay for the moulder's hands, what an inheritance for the ruthless swindler !

And with these arch-fiends march some of the Brahmins, those deadly, implacable enemies of the centuries to the conquerors of India, and the envious lawyers and teachers who have just missed Government posts.

The Brahmins are the Archbishops of Hinduism, the men who can pervert religion and transform it into their own distorted message.

Tragically these rogues who stir up trouble against the British appear in the lights of their own teachings, pamphlets, and 'rags,' as true saviours of India with a new message of salvation burning on their lips—  
'India for the Indians, out with the British !'

It is unbelievable to anyone who has not witnessed a revolt, how quickly Indians of every description



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can be stirred and inflamed by the messages of these new saviours. And well the saviours know it, for they work on credulity which is the background of all these sudden upheavals. Instead of attempting to educate Indians, to rid them of their superstitions and credulities, they deliberately and callously work upon these two traits as the basis of their plans.

They are the men who circulate such rumours as that which said that the British had kidnapped Indian children for the foundations of a new building in Bombay, causing uproar and violence with loss of many innocent lives. They are the men who boycott British goods so that they may be able to sell their own at their own price to the cost of the Indian pocket. They are, in fact, the 'Saviours of India.'

## CHAPTER II

### SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES OF THE PRE-WAR YEARS

**A**NARCHISTS are, very fortunately, infrequent disturbers of the peace of England. In fact an anarchist is so rare a phenomenon that his presence elicits almost as much interest as does the arrival of a new species at the zoo.

Yet anarchists can be extremely dangerous people, capable of the most hideous outrages and terrorization—as befits a body whose idea is to set up a form of society in which there is no government. They are usually introspective, gullible, and sadistic, a type to whom the good things of the world no longer appear as welcome intruders in the humdrum of the routine of life. Some ineradicable fault in their nature makes them turn towards the strange, the distorted, the fantastic. With avidity they lap up the dictates and teachings of their leaders, never criticizing or analysing for themselves the sayings that pour forth in a stream of disgruntled and soured venom from the lips of the men to whose rank perhaps they some day may rise.

In India anarchists form a small but very noisy body whose main occupations are terrorism, murder, and influencing the young towards the 'Right Path.' Their activities are particularly useful to anyone with a grudge against the English officers. By insidious methods anarchists can inflame many hearts with their twisted messages, and fan the flames in many an anti-Governmental outburst,

calculated to influence the still undeveloped mind of the Indian student, or the stupidity of the ordinary town or village Indian.

So with Mr. X, a gentleman of indiscreet habits, who as a Brahmin, and educationalist, came to Poona in 1891. At that time a storm of controversy was raging regarding the Act to prevent child marriage before the age of twelve. The more progressive Hindus had accepted it as a wise and justifiable measure. But the hotheads and Brahmins, for whom the Government could do no right, found plenty that was unacceptable in the Act.

The basis upon which the ethics of child marriage and suttee are built is the conception of the divinity of marriage culminating, at the extreme point to which it can be taken, in its indissolubility; thus any attempt to tamper with the length of time in which boy and girl shall be man and wife would be considered as an act of violation against the sacred canons of the Hindu faith.

Hinduism was being threatened. Up went the cry, from agitator and Brahmin, from ragamuffin and ascetic—'religion in danger.' All over the country efforts were made to stir the people into revolt against the Government, but the only two breaking-points in the eruption that threatened India were Calcutta and Poona. In both these places anarchical influence was strong and feeling ran high. In Poona the adoration of Sivaji, a Hindu hero, was revived, and societies for physical culture were started. Both these measures were taken to create a body which could be relied upon for agitation.

At first the anarchists contented themselves with pure anti-Moslem demonstrations, such amusements as timing their Hindu processions with those of the Moslems, and generally sowing the seeds of unrest between the worshippers of Allah and those of a

decrepit Hindu god which had come in very useful for anarchical reasons. Anti-Moslem feeling was worked to such a pitch, notably by Mr. X, that attacks on Moslem mosques became a sidelight of the religious holidays.

On one such occasion the British thought fit to forbid what they supposed to be another attack upon a Moslem mosque. Immediately the anarchical tone changed from anti-Moslem to anti-British. It was the opportunity they had been waiting for, perhaps anticipating. For the moment the situation was extremely dangerous, for the Hindus were excited, and to have applied a spark would have spelt disaster. But for some reason the danger passed, the anarchical wave subsided, and all but a few fanatics were once more content.

Then, by a stroke of misfortune, came another of those happenings out of which extremists can usually be relied upon to make capital. The bubonic plague broke out in India. All over the country it raged, bringing death in its trail. The simple country folk were terrified. Outbreaks of cholera they had known and mastered, but this new disease . . . they had heard their fathers talk about it, and if the description was true, the most terrible swelling and pain was caused and a diseased one was lucky to get away with his life.

So throughout India, before the real disease itself had penetrated, another had worked itself on backward Indian minds.

And perhaps, to a small village in the Deccan, would come an absurd, albeit a holy, spectacle—a man covered from head to foot in ashes and dung, wearing but a cloth girded round his loins.

A *sadhu*, a Hindu religious man, with, perhaps, wise words upon his lips, news for a lonely village many days from the nearest town. What did he say? A terrible plague had broken out? It was

bad news. The English were doing nothing to help? They were hindering the Hindus in their efforts to stamp out the plague? It was bad.

Thus the seeds of unrest would be sown throughout the country, the news that a dreadful plague was approaching and that the British were doing nothing to stop it. Sudden, child-like revolts flared up only to subside. Uneasiness gripped the frightened Indians.

On 4 May 1897, Mr. X protested against the sanitary measures being taken by the Government.

As volunteers were not forthcoming in sufficient quantities, British soldiers were sometimes employed to search for suspected cases. But these house to house searches were offensive to Indian ideas of privacy, and consequently received wholesale condemnation by X.

He also accused the Government of 'oppression of the people'—that blunderbuss in the extremist's armoury—and encouraged all and sundry towards the paths of revolution with, or without, bombs.

In fact, he plainly encouraged his Poona confrères to sedition, a fact which, coupled with the murder of two British officers just a month later, led to his conviction and imprisonment.

On 22 June, two Government officers had been assassinated as they were leaving a reception held at Government House, Ganeshkhind, in connection with Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

It was a dark night, and neither Mr. Rand, the Plague Commissioner, nor Lieutenant Ayers, a young army officer, suspected danger as they said 'good night' on the steps of Government House. Later their bodies were found, dead, and the slow but effective investigations associated with British rule, began.

Soon one Damokar Chitpawan, who was notorious in Poona as an extremist who had taken part in the

organizing of the physical culture societies, was arrested, convicted, and hanged for the outrages.

The physical culture society some time afterwards made another test of their salubrious exercises, by attempting to murder a chief constable—in which they were twice unsuccessful and do not appear to have made a further attempt—and by killing two unfortunate witnesses to Damokar Chitpawan's death.

In a frenzy of enthusiasm at the fate of his unfortunate comrades who, by this time, were well on the way to a 'better world,' X wrote something of an exceedingly inflammatory character in his journal with the sad result that he himself was clapped into jail.

His fate is not a matter for lamentation. But his influence upon the youth of Poona was unfortunate. The physical culture societies existed to teach students of Poona, and for that matter anyone else who cared, the truth. But it was a distorted truth and one that led many a dejected lad up the road to trouble.

By now the seeds of revolutionary thought were penetrating to every corner of India. From Bombay to Madras, from Lahore to Calcutta, sped the messages of revolt and sedition. During the following years, the organizations and conspiracies which were exposed, for their scale and magnitude, have never been equalled by the ranks of anarchy.

Bengal, for instance, soon became a breeding place for anarchists. In 1905, Lord Curzon decided that, for purposes of administration, Bengal would have to be split in two—Bihar and Orissa, and Eastern Bengal and Assam. Immediately a wave of indignation swept through the country and revolts became the order of the day.

It was the chance that the anarchists had been waiting for. In 1902 two men had started to spread

extremist creeds in Bengal. They were sons of a Government medical officer, and the eldest, educated in England, had been rejected by the Indian Civil Service, because he was unable to ride. This setback, which so many people would have taken with fortitude, acted on him in an opposite way.

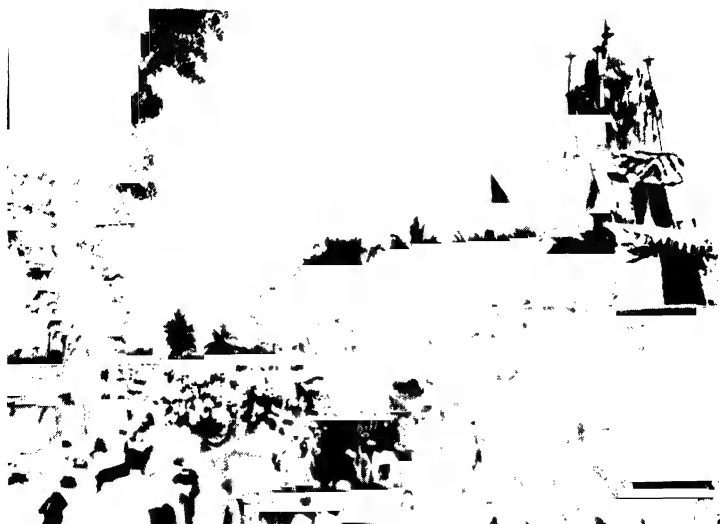
He brooded over it, worried, until his dejected mind forced him into the ranks of the anarchists. He and his brother were a pretty pair. Ever since 1902 they had been spreading anarchist-cum-religious doctrines, openly subversive to the Government, by means of a paper they established, and by talking to the English-speaking population of the district. By 1905 the stage was set.

Their gospel had found fertile land in which to grow, and the flower it brought forth was beginning to mature. Then Lord Curzon proposed the partition of Bengal. The cries of thousands went up that the motherland was being torn in half, that the nation of Bengalis was being split in two. And following closely on these cries came a crop of terrible outrages.

Bengal favoured the bomb cult and this creed spread into the surrounding provinces. It was not altogether unexpected that two ladies, Mrs. and Miss Kennedy, when out riding in Mirzapur (in the United Provinces), were killed by a bomb thrown by two students. It was a dastardly assassination. One of the youths was hanged, and the other, fearing the same fate, committed suicide. The bomb was not intended for the two ladies—it was the judge of Mirzapur whom the assassins were after.

Then came the Allipore Conspiracy Case, which smelt more of melodrama than real life. The informer in the trial was shot in prison by two more students.

In 1908, Bengal had a foundation on which to



FESTIVAL IN THE TEMPLE OF NANDHI



THE INDIAN MUTINY MEMORIAL, CAWNPORE





work on the erection of an anarchial structure. The boys and girls turned out from the private schools which received no Government grants and which 'crammed' as much as they could into their pupils in as short a space of time as possible, were just the places to impregnate with revolutionary pamphlets. Before a youth left school his mind was aglow with nationalism, and ready to accept without hesitation the wildest order of his leader.

Terrorism and murder reigned everywhere. Many were the secret threats, the tortures and killings that went on *sub rosa*. Magistrates, Civil Servants, and Army officers all came in for their share of narrow squeaks from the anarchist bomb or knife.

In 1907 a Bengal journalist left Bengal for Madras with the object of starting sedition there. But he received little help from the sympathetic but emphatic Indians. They liked the sound of his Swaraj (Home Rule) clarion call (acquired in daily doses from his paper, *New India*) but they did not trust him. So he departed from Madras, a sadder, sorrowing, and wiser man.

In November of 1908, in Bengal, Sir Andrew Fraser narrowly missed being blown up by the plans of conspiring anarchists. Later the age-old scourge of India, Dacoity, sprang up again. Travellers of all descriptions were waylaid and robbed, sometimes murdered. Gang robbery was practised to raise funds, and pickets tried to enforce the boycott of imported goods that the anarchists had declared. It was not until four years later—1912—that the storm abated.

Now the Arya Samaj (society) had been founded by a new disciple of India in 1875, who had based the doctrines of his new religion on the teachings of the Vedas (the ancient Hindu scriptures). He condemned caste, the sacred authority of the Brahmins, and all the other accretions of the pure Hindu faith.

But his religion unfortunately was strongly nationalistic, and while it was patronised by a number of progressive Hindus, it also attracted a number of violent extremists who helped to give it a bad name.

It was said before the War that wherever there was an Arya Samaj there was sedition as well. This was hotly denied by the fervent and devout members of the society, but by reckoning the number of seditionists proved to belong to the Arya Samaj, it was seen that the accusations were true.

In fact, before 1914, the colleges which the Samaj had built were veritable breeding grounds of young seditionists, and did incalculable harm towards that patriotism that was so necessary for India during war years.

In 1913 two Bengalis made their way up from Calcutta to Delhi and Lahore—with two highly polished bombs. The first was left at Delhi and the second at Lahore.

A little later, in Delhi, a bomb was thrown at the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge. It landed in the howdah of the elephant on which he was riding, killed one of his staff, and peppered the Viceroy with gramophone needles and other such delicacies.

In Lahore a messenger was killed in the Lawrence Gardens by a bomb. Unlucky man, for this bomb was intended for British officers.

At first the police were at a loss to explain these two outrages. Then, by a clever piece of detection, they unravelled the secret.

The two Bengalis who had brought the bombs from Calcutta were also tracked down. One of them was hanged. The other was sentenced to transportation for life, *but later, on being threatened with the death sentence, he confessed that it was he who, disguised as a Moslem lady, had thrown the bomb at Lord Hardinge.*

## SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES OF THE PRE-WAR YEARS

So the mysteries were successfully unravelled, and for a time peace reigned over the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab.

But while the Hindu element was quiet, the Moslem was becoming noisy. Like little children, when one is not making a noise, the other must.

The trouble began with the British declaration of neutrality in the Italo-Turkish and Balkan wars. Since that time the Moslems had had their suspicions that the attitude of the British towards Islam was not all it should be. Then in 1912, the Moslems interpreted one of Mr. Asquith's speeches as hostile to Islam and from then on the position was definitely ripe for subversive activities to flourish.

Unrest in Islamic India began in the persons of Moslem fanatics.

But the Punjabi Moslems held firm, and it was left to a small and isolated band of fanatics to carry on the work of raising a Pan-Islamic hell. When these fanatics saw how far they were progressing they put their heads together once again and decided that to break the power of Britain in India a Hindu-Mohammedan *entente* must be made.

The great hopes that these hot-heads had in the notion that they were at last going to break the English only resulted in anguish and suffering for thousands, and more bloodshed than is usually connected with local risings.

The plot that ensued, aimed to wreck the British regime in India, forms one of the most coloured pages of all time in the history of espionage, counter-espionage, and sabotage.

It was indeed lucky that we had men of the calibre of Sir Michael O'Dwyer in the Punjab during those war years. With his cool determination and courage, his pertinacity and grit, Sir Michael formed a bulwark against the menaces of rival powers

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and factions that is characteristic of the great British administrator. As Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab in the critical years between 1913-19 he did more to ensure that British rule would survive in India than any other man.

## CHAPTER III

### SECRET SOCIETIES—BOMB PERVERTS—THE ENLISTMENT OF YOUTH

**B**EFORE continuing with the story of the secret subversive activities which were being carried on in India during the War, it is necessary to find out how the agitators and plotters worked, who were the men they influenced, who financed them and why they carried on subversive activities at all.

In 1885 the first congress of the Indian National Party was held. The Mutiny sores had healed and were now but faint scars on the face of India. But just as the English left movement, which began in the late years of the eighteenth century, flowered once more after it had been suppressed (during the Napoleonic wars by the use of spies and abortive laws), so did the Indian leftward movement once again manifest itself when the Mutiny had been forgotten.

The first meeting was patronized and attended by Indian humanitarians, reformers, and the like, by people who saw that while British rule in India had brought prosperity and a number of much-needed reforms, it had brought also a number of abuses. These people were sincere and ardent supporters of a policy that they believed would help to better the lives of Indians.

But, like all people with humanitarian leanings, they failed to see the immense difficulties in the Government's path towards a better India, and they

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failed to take into account the enormous strides that British rule had achieved. They were impatient, and they lacked the calm reasoning and logic of the rulers of India. The best that can be said for them is that they did help to sharpen the spear-point of progressive policy.

But in their ranks were a number of less-desirable 'reformers.' They were lawyers, journalists, school teachers, and professors. Some of these men were sincere, but many before long showed that they were opposed to every sensible, progressive policy put forward. They seemed to be possessed with violent and ineradicable revolutionary creeds, 'hot-gospellers' who found not even lukewarm supporters from the saner quarters. There was a smattering of Karl Marx about them, a larger portion of the more debased and erotic of Hindu religions, combined with a fair knowledge of the easiest way to achieve a certain species of limelight, variously regarded as either fame or notoriety.

A little later a split occurred in the Congress. The humanitarians of a sombre hue steered on, in a straight, undeviating course. But the more violent section painted itself an even deeper red and veered on a leftward course, to reconstruct India on national lines, presumably by a revolutionary policy.

Were these men sincere in their fanatical way? Or were they merely agents in the pay of others, agitators stirring revolt to line the pockets of a few avaricious merchants?

It seems certain that Indians who could stoop to seditious activities on the part of foreign Powers could have prototypes who were not above receiving money by helping Indian merchants in their greed for more profit.

Thus there would be a fanatic who found it remunerative to be a fanatic. There would also be a sincere, though probably unbalanced, fanatic who

really imagined that he was the herald of a better earthly world, and that, unless a revolution could be brought into the picture somewhere, the possibility of his Utopia could not be achieved.

Profit has always stirred men more than the possibility of obtaining a fairer social system, so that it is likely there were far more self-seekers in the revolutionary ramp of India than lofty Utopian idealists.

To the Indian business man these idealists offered a unique opportunity for furthering their claims upon the raw materials and markets of India. If a nation-wide revolt against the British could be organized, there was a distinct possibility of actually turning the intruders (oppressors) out of India for good. At least a boycott of British goods might be arranged (this has actually happened), with substantial remuneration to the Indian manufacturer and trader. And while these agitators found money in the business of kicking the sleeping Englishman, they also found themselves highly respected saviours of the new India, whose messages to their brothers were read and listened to with much earnest concentration. The self-imposed task of zealot formed, if the zealot was clever enough, a respected and moneyed profession.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer, with his vast knowledge of the inside workings of the Indian administration, writes in his book of reminiscences :

' The pose of a patriot is useful when it enables you to boycott British goods as "Satanic" and sell your own at your own price to your own countrymen. This perhaps explains why the Bombay mill-owners a few years ago contributed nearly fifty lakhs to Gandhi's boycott movement.'

Thus behind the sincere in India there are always the self-seekers who do not bother with whom they



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fraternize as long as they can expect, in a reasonably short time, a larger share of profits.

They are the men behind the scenes. They are seldom revealed, for the protective measures they take to safeguard themselves against British suspicions are usually impenetrable.

The men they employ, the scribe-scholar-lawyer class, are the people on whom the success of the agitation depends. The business men can supply the money, but they cannot inflame an Indian mob, they cannot convince an Indian student that anarchism or revolution is the aim that he should wholeheartedly support. That job is left to the men who write with a verbose impassioned style of the injustices that British rule brings with it, who summon the people to worship some ancient god such as Ganpati and who stir Moslem against Hindu and Sikh against Moslem. With their knowledge of the Indian mind, what appeals to it, and how it can be inflamed, they can work miracles—and in so short a space of time that incalculable damage can be done if a sharp watch is not kept on their activities.

It would be idle to dispute the undoubted gifts of these men. They are clever tacticians. It is indeed a pity that their gifts should be applied to pernicious and subversive matters, but that is the outcome of their education and the work of others on their young and impressionable minds. They might have been brilliant scholars, sent to England to complete their education. The Indian mind is far more susceptible than the English, and an English education might breed an intense feeling of inferiority-complex on anyone who for one moment entertained the thought that he was considered a member of an inferior race.

Perhaps such a scholar would throw away the opportunity he had of completing his education in England after one or two years, and return to India

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filled with enmity and hatred against the British, who governed his land.

What more than he should fall into the ranks of embittered anarchists, to carve a niche for himself in history, for notoriety if not for fame ?

Then there are the Indians who have been educated in India, who, with a smattering of the English language and a knowledge of English ways and commerce, hope one day to find a position in the Indian Civil Service. Every year numbers of them are rejected as unsuitable and because, too, there are not enough posts to go round. Again, here is a class of person, bitterly disillusioned, who almost automatically finds his way into the revolutionary ranks.

Many more are the types who join the anarchical cults. Unsuccessful lawyers, Bachelor of Art failures, in fact anyone with a grudge against anything. That grudge always finds its most successful field in the sphere of anti-British provocation.

These men together make a very strong, very crafty and very dangerous opposition to British rule. They have considered it their business to stir up trouble against the British ever since the early '90's. Their methods are a direct appeal to Indians to throw off the British yoke and achieve Indian nationalism, by propaganda at times when some agricultural dispute is being waged, or territorial rights are being settled, propaganda of an anti-governmental character can bring untold harm in its wake.

The type of propaganda they employ can be divided into two classes : (1) the class for students, English-speaking Indians, and semi-educated Indians ; and (2) that for the mass of illiterate country folk.

The first type is employed where there are schools, colleges, and universities. Such provinces as Bengal, the Punjab, and the United Provinces are cases in

point. Calcutta has always been a hot-bed of crime, and as a centre of student-sedition it has the most notorious name. In fact, the whole of the densely populated province of Bengal is the worst breeding-ground of all seditious activity. Lahore, too, up in the Punjab, is another city highly favoured by trouble-stirrers, while Delhi comes in for its share.

The Indian lad goes to school with high hopes of making a success of his education, perhaps winning a scholarship to a university, and ending up as a prosperous official in the employ of the Government.

He may live in Bengal, in which case he will go to either a private school unaided by the State or to a State-controlled school.

Years go by and he works hard at his lessons, and finds himself, by the standard of the other boys, fairly well advanced. Then the year of the examination comes. If he passes the examination he will rest content that his work will secure him a good post—he may even be chosen to ‘finish off’ at a university.

The final cramming and examination days pass by and the student waits to know the result of his efforts.

About a month later the results go up on the board. As the youth scans the board anxiously he finds his name is not there. He has failed. And for a very good reason too. In his last two years he has come under the influence of a master of the school. He has been attracted to him, has found in him an ever-sympathetic friend who listens to his troubles with patience and understanding. The friendship has grown. Conversation has drifted, on occasions which became more repeated, into the political sphere, and the master has ever directed the youth’s thoughts towards revolutionary creeds. The boy is at a loss to understand this at first. He has always thought there was something wrong about people who tried to undermine the Government. But

schoolmaster is such a good friend, so well-balanced and all-wise that the youth gradually begins to accept the idea that he is right, although he would not openly say so.

Then his failure in the examination—which is caused by these puzzling questions that his brain always asked in seeking for the real explanation—coupled with the results of living with his wife during the critical years of his finishing period—turn him into revolutionary paths. He begins to see that all he had been told is true. He starts to read with eagerness the seditious papers that find their way into the school, all the time doing just what he is intended to do, till he becomes so steeped in anarchical propaganda that he decides to join a society to further the good work of spreading the truth throughout Bengal.

And so the anarchists find fresh recruits for their ranks. Colleges are impregnated with revolutionary teachers, revolutionary propaganda, and other aids to the Utopia-of-the-near-future.

There is always the possibility that youth, by taking up these extremist creeds, will find something out of the ordinary in them—something with which to shock people. Yes, it's great fun to shock people, but it isn't nearly so funny in India. It leads into all sorts of strange paths.

The Indian youth, by marrying at an early age, finds his desires almost a spent force by the time he reaches the revolutionary ranks. It has had another effect on him also. It has taught him a too early eroticism at a time when he needed all his energy for his studies. The dangers of submitting to the desires of the flesh in adolescence are well known. In India it is hard to prevent them. The sacred laws of the Brahmins put dire penalties on anyone who marries at a late age. It is the custom to marry young in India.

To keep the interest in anarchism still burning in his breast the strange cults of the anarchists are amazingly effective. They combine the worship of the most savage and horrible of the Hindu goddesses—Mother Kali—with an appeal to the lowest and most sadistic passions in the youth's body. The filthiest literature, beside the most extreme, is circulated among them, and they become depraved physically, mentally, and morally, until they are a living shadow of the successful people they might have been.

Every kind of movement of India—even Anarchism—must have a religious background. For those more extreme movements, Thuggee and Dacoity for instance, the more terrible aspects of Hinduism were used. The true Hindu religion may have been very lofty and inspiring, but Hinduism offers the choice of so many gods to the worshipper, and some of them have vile and debasing aspects.

Anarchism has a particularly objectionable religious accompaniment. While the initiate kneels at the foot of Mother Kali, represented in her wildest aspect, with matted hair pulled about her head, her bloodshot eyes glaring mercilessly down, her hands squeezing the last life blood out of a dummy man. Two bombs lie at her feet. Three small lamps lend an unearthly stage effect as they cast darting shadows over ghastly goddess, and the chanting, depraved worshippers. Two bowls of incense feed a heavy, languorous, smoke cloud, which breaks and eddies as it fights upwards to the clearer air.

The exotic atmosphere bemuses the worshippers, leads them into a trance. Perhaps Mother Kali's hellish eyes have hypnotized them and the worshippers are enmeshed in the strange powers that emanate from that lifeless figure.

The chanting rises to a quavering, shrill falsetto.

The doped struggling worshippers work themselves into a paroxysm of fanatical fervour. The young initiate, scarcely realizing what he is doing, bends forward and touches Mother Kali, rather as if he had been asked to put his fingers into acid. The climax of the ceremony is reached ; the anarchists claim another follower. The chanting subsides as the final vows are read, the bemused worshippers wake from their trance. . . .

We leave them there, struggling against another depressing aftermath of primitive savagery, waking once more from the bestiality that is the cornerstone of anarchism, until they again meet in another orgy. Perhaps before that next meeting someone is chosen to throw a bomb at an important member of the ruling class. That is the highest honour that a bomb-pervert can attain. That is his greatest offering to Mother Kali. Sometimes he does not wait for a command from his leader to tell him he is to throw a bomb. In a frenzy of religious fervour, he dashes from his house with a crudely engineered bomb hidden beneath his *dhوتي*, hastens on through the jostling mobs of his home town until he reaches European quarters. Perhaps he is lucky, and meets a magistrate or Government official. With a hastily invoked prayer to Mother Kali, the bomb is thrown with all the force that a fanatical religion can give. . . .

So the anarchists carry on their dreadful pursuits. The type described above are followers of the bomb-cult. There are other cults—notably the poison and knife cults that are also used by seditionists—but the bomb has always appealed to Indians as the instrument that will give a death of absolutely supreme gratification to their perverted minds. This type of extremist is usually of the student class, which forms a minority in Indian politics. This class is useful as a terrorization force, but lacks mass

support. For a proper large-scale revolt against the Government the agricultural workers have to be roused, for over one hundred and ten millions of India's peoples derive their small incomes from this source. The town Indians, too, form a large percentage of the population, and here seditious efforts have to be made in order to manufacture a successful revolt.

In the agricultural districts different methods are employed. First, *fakirs* or *sadhus* of any description are sent round the country-side. They make a deep impression on the Indian mind. Approaching the village with nothing to cover him but a loin cloth, with shrivelled limbs and ribs protruding in lines across his chest, his thin spindle legs and body covered with dust and ashes, his head covered with the dung of the sacred cow, it is well understandable.

The *sadhu* will, perhaps, sit down, with his begging bowl in one hand, the finger of the other clutching his rosary. He is an emblem of piety and humility, an ascetic of simple saintliness, albeit one who fetches the hard-won coins of the villagers from their robes.

He starts to recite his prayers, blessing the good folk who give him money with the aid of the kindly Vishnu. Soon he begins to talk. He rambles on, playing on the credulity of these primitive people in a cunning, loquacious way until his audience, swayed by the magic of his words and the drift of his message, turns against the Government.

A baby, perhaps, had disappeared from the village. (He had already found that out.) Who had taken it away? (It had probably been killed by its parents to whom it was an unwanted addition to the ever-increasing progeny.) Anyway the baby had disappeared and as its parents were not the sort to shout its death around the village, no one realized the present position of the child.

But the *fakir* was attempting to make them. The

British had taken it in the night and had sold it. Some such trumped-up story of kidnap would always find sympathy with native hearts, and so it was now. Some would actually believe the *fakir's* holy words. Others, a little firmer in their trust of the British, would listen but forget the lying words later. In any case, the seed would be sown. Some would begin to think. . . .

To get a whole race to think requires enormous efforts on the part of the organizers, and on the part of the *sadhus*. But it can be done. Then a reform is introduced by the Government. The seeds that have been sown come in very useful then. An agricultural reform is proposed.

Before the British can properly explain it to the uneducated Indians, the agitators are already around, twisting and distorting the import of the reforms, until they are made to become instruments of oppression in the hands of the wielders. The situation is ripe . . . just a spark to light it and everything explodes into a seething, murdering mass of embittered and savage peoples, waging a bloody and primitive battle against their 'oppressors.' It all helps the anarchical cause. . . .

India is, of course, divided into several religious groups. The most powerful group is the Hindu with some two hundred and sixteen million followers, the Moslem (Islamic) faith with some seventy million followers comes next, and the Sikh faith is a bad third with three million. This estimate, however, excludes the worshippers of the Buddha, who number eleven million. They do not live in India proper, but mainly in Burma and Ceylon.

There is always a source of unrest in pitting rival religion against rival religion. It is the extremist's stock-in-trade for disturbing the peace that would be India's, were the British Government allowed to develop her immense resources without the hindrance



of a few fanatics, who feel with the most high-minded sentiments that their brothers are being oppressed.

These methods are used both in town and country districts. A Hindu god who has fallen into disuse can be revived as a medium of worship, and a basis of supporters can be formed, as in the case of Sivaji at Poona. The movement is then worked by means of cunning talk into an anti-Mohammedan sentiment.

Pig skins are flung over Moslem mosques, a clamouring din is made outside them while the Moslems are doing their obeisance to Allah. This inevitably stirs an intense hatred between the two sects, which is worked on by the handful of agitators in the 'New Hindu Movement' and soon, if luck goes their way and the authorities do not intervene, a first-class clash ensues. The Moplah Rebellion, of which mention will be made later, is one of the best examples of this type of agitation. It culminated in a loss of life running well into the thousands.

There have been all kinds of different methods of stirring unrest among what could be generally classed as the illiterate peoples of India. But religious causes stand out head and shoulders above the rest as you look back through the years. The drum ecclesiastic of Islam, the revival of Singhism, and the wearing of the sword, the 'purification of Hinduism,' all these and other movements have a strong extremist bent.

Why these organizations that canalize Indian thought into their own extremist ways have been allowed to grow, and why they are tolerated to-day, are questions hard to answer. It is indeed amazing that a governing body should allow its subjects to carry on subversive pursuits, to allow men to organize revolution among the people, to stir up strife between religions, to hold meetings where the most

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sadistic rites are enforced, to pepper schools and universities with extremist propaganda, in fact to openly violate every moral rule of humanity and create a land of unrest, sullenness, and unhappiness.

It is, perhaps, the inheritance of liberal 'humanitarians,' who, seated in arm-chairs before a comfortable fire in England, built their theoretical dreams story upon story, like a man who attempts to make a stable structure out of a pack of cards. As they sat there, divorced from the reality of the thousand and one problems that beset the Empire-builder, theorizing, moralizing, and condemning, sympathizing with the poor 'oppressed' Indians, they devised their own humanitarian schemes.

Public feeling can do much to alleviate the misery of a people overrun by an invader, or similarly ill-treated by a cruel ruling class, but it must be an informed public opinion ; it must not be misguided as it assuredly was in the case of India. There the weapon, so useful at times to compel the Government to action over a particularly notorious case of oppression, has hindered our administrators and directly helped the extremists to engineer some of the most horrible rebellions ever known to civilization.

Remembering that the Indians are uneducated, that they are poor, and in some cases diseased, they tried to force the Government, already with its plans which were to work in harmony with others for social enlightenment and a more understanding people, to hasten on the imperative task. Naturally, it is a long job to educate 360 million people ! It cannot be achieved in a wink of an eye, as the 'humanitarians' suppose.

Other aspects of India have to be looked at as well. The country has to be opened up with railways and roads, and man and machine powers have to be used for these purposes instead of social needs.

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But the reformer still goes on remembering the case of the Indian wife who died in childbirth because the midwife had dirty hands, and other similar delicacies (whispered round polite English drawing-room tables).

What is forgotten is the number of steps that British rule has taken to lighten the load of the Indian people, the total eradication of Thuggee, the suppression of Dacoity, the building of colleges, universities, and schools, the attempts to free the Indian mind from superstition, and the welfare work that is already progressing on a fast scale. It is forgotten that their own countrymen are not inhuman taskmasters, ever pressing the Indian to greater efforts so that they can reap the harvest that falls from their work. It is forgotten, that there is a very dangerous class of Indian merchant who assumes the guise of nationalist and patriot, not, let it be understood, for the benefits it will bring to the Indian people, but simply for the additional wealth that it will bring to his pocket. Already British rule has done much for the prosperity of these men. However, contentment is a virtue which they can scarcely recognize.

A division among members of the ruling class in India as to the best methods of governing the country must surely create a gap in which seditionists can work. These seditionists seize their opportunity . . . and the arm-chair theorists carry on with their dreams, their idealist speeches.

## CHAPTER IV

### INDIA ON THE EVE OF SEDUCTION

**I**N December 1914 a Moslem Educational Conference was called at Rawalpindi. In February 1915 fifteen Mohammedan students disappeared from India. They lived in Lahore, and on receiving their instructions from the Moslem seditionists, left in disguise. They travelled on to the Afghanistan frontier, stopping at certain places of which they had been notified, Islamic oases for Allah's prophets across the North-West Frontier by wild and barren paths, into the hilly fastnesses of the Wahabis of Muahaddin.

The Wahabis have a particularly notorious name as far as risings go. They appear to be employed and financed by centres deeper in the heart of India, where seditionist spies can learn the Government secrets and act accordingly. Frontier trouble has always been a nightmare to British administration in India. Revolts there can be used with success in drawing troops from other much-needed areas into the frontier hills. The tribesmen then play a kind of guerrilla warfare, and after many months of sparring with the British troops and aeroplanes, decide their work is done and 'cease fire.'

To one of these frontier tribes came the fifteen young Mohammedans and stayed with the people of the tribe for a time until the paths were cleared for another journey. Then the Emir of the Wahabis sent them on to Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan.

There they were arrested by the Government and clapped into prison. Later, on the representations of the anti-British section at Kabul, they were set free. The extremists in Kabul were, of course, only too pleased to get in touch with them, and soon there was a conclave of conspirators in Kabul, bubbling over with their schemes to usurp British rule in India.

The students were praised as heroes of the movement and sent off once more on revolutionary errands. Sir Michael O'Dwyer states that a few of them died miserably in Kabul ; others were sent off on missions to Central Asia, Japan, and Persia, where three were caught by the Russians—who were our allies—on the Persian border, and were given up to the British. One extremist and a student were on a mission to China and Japan, and the other two students were the bearers of letters to the Sultan of Turkey. One of these was shot for espionage in Persia, and the other two were brought back to Lahore in 1917. Sir Michael, who was then Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, states that he gave them a conditional pardon 'more out of regard for their friends than themselves.'

In August 1916 the authorities received their first intimation of a plot that has been dubbed 'The Silk Letter Plot.'

The story is a romantic one of how Islam tried to set itself up in a truly efficient way. By uniting all the worshippers of Allah under British sovereignty, the plotters hoped to throw the British out of the Near and Middle East and put up in its place a State owning allegiance to Allah. The plot had considerable Germanic backing. It would be idle to argue that, had the plot succeeded, there was no guarantee that Islam would ever be set up. The plot did not succeed, although the most secretive methods were employed—spies, secret emissaries,

ciphers and other such traditions of the *Arabian Nights*. India was the most coveted possession of the conspirators. But it was also the hardest to wrench from the bonds which held it. It was thought, however, that with German help, which the conspirators trusted implicitly, and with the co-operation of the Ghadr party, they would be able to overthrow British power. Their own plans involved the real mystery of the drama—the Silk Letters.

The unravelling of the mystery of these letters is dealt with very fully in Sir Michael O'Dwyer's book, *India as I Knew It*. As head of the Punjab administration, he had first-hand knowledge of the plot, which was just as well for British rule, and he gives a detailed narrative of the whole course of events which culminated in the plot being found out and suppressed.

Among the students in Kabul who had 'disappeared' from the Punjab were two youths whom Sir Michael O'Dwyer had promised a free pardon if they would return. The two students then began sending back messages to their father's house in the Punjab, via a servant. The servant's frequent excursions eventually aroused the suspicions of the father. He tackled the servant about the business he was carrying on. He admitted that besides bringing news of the students he had also brought secret messages from Kabul. These were the 'Silk Letters,' writings on lengths of silk which had been sewn up inside the lining of his coat. These he had left in a native State for safety.

The father ordered the servant to produce the coat. When it was brought to him, he slit the lining and perused the letters, of which he was unable to understand a word, as they were written in an elaborate Persian code.

However, he realized they constituted a menace to the *status quo* in India, and as the first agent in

the unravelling of a mysterious plot, passed them on to the Commissioner of the Division. The Commissioner sent them on to Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who states that he 'did not grasp their full meaning at first, but understood enough to satisfy myself that they revealed a plot with wide ramifications.'

He passed the letters on to Sir Charles Cleveland of the Criminal Investigation Department, where the mystery was finally unravelled.

The messages were from two Maulvis, who had previously been on the staff of the School of Theology at Deoband, United Provinces. There they had taught about the Holy War that was to unite Islam. It was for these ends that they went to Kabul in 1915. They were working in conjunction with the other revolutionaries there and the German mission.

The letters were to be taken to a Mohammedan priest of Islam, who was also a teacher at Deoband, who had by then left India for the sanctity of Mecca, to consult with his superiors on this same question of the uniting of Islam. He got in touch with the Turkish General in the Hejaz, Ghalib Pasha, and together they pronounced a Holy War against the British.

'The Silk Letters' were instructions to the priest to obtain the sanction and, if possible, help of the Turkish Government, and of the Sherif of Mecca, in the Holy War.

It should be mentioned that the conspirators had also sent out letters to the Russian Government asking for help in their attempts to overthrow British power. The German part in this and another conspiracy forms another story. It can be seen that the plot was a very real menace to British power in India. Sir Michael O'Dwyer says about it:

'I think now we perhaps treated the matter too lightly; for its centre, the Provisional Govern-

ment, remained firmly rooted in Kabul, whence it continued to encourage seditious agitation in India and hostile action by the Frontier tribes during the War.'

Only twelve of the Punjab conspirators, whom the letters revealed, were put in prison. The main reason for treating the plot so lightly was that the Sherif of Mecca, who was to form a very important link in it, revolted against the Turkish Government, thus dividing Islam into two factions and completely occupying its time in a kind of Islamic Civil War. The Sherif, as an ally of the British Government, stood by his word to us, so helping to prevent what might have turned into a nasty situation. The help, too, of the Emir Habidullah in Afghanistan, as a friend and ally of the British Government when the German mission was dangling prizes in front of his eyes—if he would help them against the British—cannot be over-emphasized. Add to these two serious rifts in Islam's plans, the fact that the majority of the Punjabi Moslems could be relied on to stand firm against the influences of the plotters, and the reason for the Punjab Government not taking the matter as seriously as it might is self-evident.

The story must now turn to the Pacific coast of the United States.

Along the Pacific seaboard of North America are a number of ports—San Francisco and Vancouver being the most important. To them had migrated a number of Indians, mostly Punjabis, who had worked their way eastward in search of better wages, and had finally, after working in China and Japan, struck the U.S.A. and Canada. Here amongst the docks of Western America they had formed an Indian colony. They came in for severe penalization regarding the status of Indian labourers in White



ports, so that when the Indian agitators arrived there were plenty of causes for grievance. These agitators worked on them skilfully—they were always shrewd judges of human character—until there was an embittered restless faction of Easterners, sickened with life in a Western port.

The agitation, in the main, was one of vituperation at the attitude of the British Government towards its Indian subjects who were receiving such a miserable time in America. In 1913 they sent over an 'advance guard' from Canada to the Punjab to hold protest meetings against the Canadian immigration laws.

At first their meetings were ordinary protest meetings. They managed to fetch a certain amount of sympathy from the Punjabis, but soon the attitude turned from one of condemning the Canadian Immigration Laws to one of hostility to the Government. In fact the meetings continued to become more openly opposed to the Government, and it was seen that the object in view was to stir up trouble among the Punjabis.

After a serious warning the 'advance guard' returned to Canada in 1914, when it was discovered that they had been spreading sedition in the Punjab. However, after their return to Canada, dissemination of subversive propaganda was still carried on, although it only influenced a very small band of anti-British Punjabis. At this time it was found out that thousands of discontented Punjabis intended to return from the American ports to India. The Government of India saw the danger that this would have in stirring discontent in the Punjab. The war years had already brought enough trouble on the shoulders of the Indian Government, so they decided to pass, hastily, the Ingress Ordinance, which was developed from the war-time 'Foreigners' Ingress Ordinance' previously passed.

The Government was in the nick of time. The Ordinance had been passed on 5 September 1914, and the home-comers arrived in the Hoogly on 27 September, on the Japanese steamer *Komagatu Maru*. They numbered four hundred Sikhs and sixty Mohammedans. The ship had been chartered by an Indian—and to create the necessary spirit of hostility to the British, anti-British lectures were held on board and extremist pamphlets were passed round among the passengers.

Their first object had been to force the Canadian authorities to let them into Canada. The ship arrived at Vancouver with the extremists in high hopes of forcing their entrance into Canada. They received a rude shock. The Canadian authorities would not let in any but a few who complied with the regulations. The rest were positively refused admittance to Canada. So the *Komagatu Maru* left Vancouver with its passengers just a little more dejected. Agitators amongst them continued to work on the ignorance of the Punjabis until all were once again restored into a proper revolutionary mood, and the ship, with her bows turned westward, was heading for Japan.

At Yokohama they found out that the Great War had started. Neither Hong Kong nor Shanghai would allow them to land. So the *Komagatu Maru* sailed on for Calcutta. The temper of these poor creatures, by the time they had covered the distance from San Francisco to Calcutta, can be imagined. Having been refused entry at four ports they would naturally not be in the best of humours.

In Bengal, the band of pilgrims was told, under the new Ingress Order, that they were to be taken straight to their homes in the Punjab. It was absolutely imperative to keep them out of that hive of sedition—Bengal. A search for arms was made by the Bengal authorities, but this does not appear

to have been very successful, for the Punjabis managed to smuggle a good many guns and rounds of ammunition up into the Punjab.

For the purposes of a safe and speedy journey it had been arranged to have a special train reserved for the use of the revolutionaries. Thus, in perfect comfort, they would be conveyed from Baj-Baj to the Punjab. The sixty Moslems saw the wisdom of the suggestion and got aboard the train. Not so the Sikhs. Nothing would induce them to board. They started off to walk the ten miles to Calcutta. On the way Sir William Duke met them, and ordered them to turn about and walk back again to Baj-Baj. The Sikhs were wise enough to do as they were bidden. But on reaching Baj-Baj once more they positively refused to get in the train. The scene must have been amusing. Sir William Duke, with a body of burly policemen, entreating four hundred Sikhs to get into a train! Eventually he tried to push them into the coaches, and in the uproar a shot was fired. Immediately it was followed by others until a minor battle was being waged. Eighteen Sikhs were killed, and all but thirty were captured. Needless to say that the thirty were the most dangerous members of the band.

The killing of eighteen Sikhs by the British police came in very useful for revolutionary propaganda. Highly distorted accounts of the debacle at Baj-Baj were circulated in the Punjab and the ports already mentioned. It formed just that sort of propaganda the revolutionaries wanted.

A great rush among emigrated Indians to return to the homeland then took place. Every Indian on the Pacific seemed to want to return home. Ports were besieged with boats bringing in their human cargoes. Calcutta, Madras, and Colombo were the main centres for disembarkation and at all these

places, despite the Ingress Order, a number of undesirable characters slipped through the hands of the police.

The *Tasu Maru*, a Japanese steamer, with 173 Indians on board, arrived at Calcutta on 28 October 1914. This load was really dangerous. It contained many of the leaders for the rebellion that was being worked up. They had come from America, the Philippines, Japan, and China. Firm steps were taken immediately with this batch. At Calcutta they were put under a strong guard and brought up to the Punjab by train. Here they were to be interrogated. All the way up they were violently abusive to the British regime, some even forecasting its downfall in a few months. Such scenes as these fanatics staged could not have made the Indian Government at all easy as to just what was going on. With thousands of returned Indians pouring in, the situation was growing serious. The authorities must have been considerably puzzled as to what the revolutionaries intended to do. They dealt with the batch from the *Tasu Maru* by imprisoning one hundred after glancing at their murky records. Seventy-three were set free. Unfortunately the important links in the revolutionary chain were among the seventy-three who were accorded freedom.

Under the Ingress Order it was decided to deal with the thousands of natives still pouring into the Punjab by either :

- (a) Interning them in jail if they were dangerous, pending prosecution or a change in their mental state.
- (b) If less dangerous to restrict them to their villages under guarantee of relatives or friends.
- (c) If of no, or little, danger discharging them to their villages with instructions to local authorities to watch out for their subsequent behaviour.

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Of the eight thousand men dealt with in this way, four hundred were put in jail, two thousand were kept in their villages, and the rest were given their freedom, but put under casual observation.

However many more immigrants slipped through the ports and some of these proved to be the most hot-headed fanatics that India has ever had the misfortune to see. Escaping up country, hiding in seditionist houses, stealing marches by night, they at last reached the Punjab, where they began to sow disaffection. The country became a hot-bed of subversive activity. Sir Michael O'Dwyer says :

‘ Preventive action under the Ingress Ordinance of the ordinary law was taken wherever definite and reliable information was forthcoming ; but all this time we felt we were living over a mine full of explosives. In fact, from October 1914 to September 1915 there was a constant series of explosions. All over the Central Punjab police were murdered ; loyal citizens were shot down or killed by bombs ; gang robberies, sometimes with the murder of wealthy Hindus, were carried out to raise funds for the cause ; several attempts were made to derail trains or blow up bridges ; factories for the preparation of bombs were established in various places ; bombs and material for bombs were received from the revolutionary depots ; caches of revolvers and guns were made in British districts and Native States ; an attack was made on the Indian Native States ; an attack was made on the Indian military picket guarding a railway bridge on the main line close to Amritsar, the guard was murdered and their rifles taken ; plans for seizing the arsenal at Ferozepore and the magazines at Lahore and other cantonments were formed, and persistent attempts were made, not in all cases without

success, in the Punjab and United Provinces. The fact that most of the regular British troops had gone to France and that many of the most daring of the returned emigrants were old soldiers made this part of the scheme particularly sinister.'

The Government were faced with a very grave situation. It was lucky, indeed, that the majority of the Sikhs stayed loyal. On occasions they actually helped the Government to round up undesirables. Sir Michael O'Dwyer recalls one such incident as this.

'Riding down the Anarkali Bazaar at Lahore one morning, a police officer showed me the place where a Sikh sub-inspector had been shot dead the previous evening by a Ghadr revolutionary whom he had challenged as a suspect. The murderer had attempted to escape, but was promptly collared, knocked down and made over to the police by a local sweetmeat seller. I asked to see the latter. He was not present then, but a few hours later turned up at Government House. He was a cheery, brawny fellow and explained to me that he had some skill in wrestling, and this had encouraged him to tackle a murderer with a smoking pistol in his hand. I doubt if any Indian but a Punjabi would have been so daring. He left Government House with a handsome pecuniary reward, followed by a grant of land.'

However, the extremist outbursts became more serious as time went on, and numerous outrages occurred. Coupled to the propaganda the extremist party was using, they were a powerful factor in persuading the natives that British rule the world over was waning and that in a few months it would decay and finally be vanquished. Families that had

always been loyal to the British Crown began to doubt if these rumours were true. Lawlessness in the Punjab increased, forty-five serious revolutionary outrages being reported up to February 1915. The local administrators, and anyone with power or wealth, were terrorized by the extremists to ensure that further chaos should ensue. It was a critical situation. The Government waited on tenterhooks.

Then came the attempted rebellion of 19 February. Two extremists were in Amritsar which they had made the centre of their activities. Together with them were a number of Bengalis who were occupied in making bombs.

One of the first doctrines of any revolutionary creed is that the army must be disloyal before any real damage can be done to the *status quo*. So in India the agitators started to tamper with the army. News came through that on 21 February the troops would mutiny, and in doing so murder their officers. They would then join with revolutionaries outside the cantonments and rifle the magazines, thus overthrowing the whole of the established army in Northern India.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer had to face one of the stiffest ordeals of all those trying days. His own personal bodyguard consisted of twelve of the disaffected soldiers. He knew that the first move of the revolt was to murder every Englishman in authority that the revolutionaries could lay hands on. At the same time, if he got rid of these soldiers it would arouse the suspicions of the rebels and show that their plans had been discovered. That must not be known until later. Sir Michael resisted the impulses that warned him to guard his own safety.

By the nineteenth Sir Michael had discovered that the revolutionaries suspected a leakage of their plans and had shifted the date of the rising to that very day. Messengers had already gone out from the

rebel headquarters at Lahore telling the troops to mutiny. Not a moment could be wasted in smashing the whole subversive structure.

On the afternoon of the nineteenth the police were sent to raid the four houses in which the whole rebel machinery was housed.

Breaking into the houses, the police captured thirteen of the plotters and a whole armoury of bombs, a plant for making bombs, literature, and flags. The ringleaders of the agitators were nowhere to be found. They had disappeared completely, but one of them turned up later in the lines of the Twelfth Cavalry at Meerut in possession of an assortment of bombs. He was caught red-handed, and for his part in the First Lahore Conspiracy Case was condemned to death. Another was also sentenced to death, but later the Viceroy commuted his sentence to one of life transportation.

The bold and decisive action Sir Michael O'Dwyer took in foiling the rebels successfully put paid to their plans. Messages were sent out to the other affected cantonments, with the result that drastic action was taken immediately, and the members of the revolutionary party, who gathered outside that night in expectation of fireworks, were sadly disappointed.

After this bold *coup* the police carried on with rounding up suspects, and many of them turned informers to avoid being sentenced to death or imprisonment. This made the job of rounding up even more rapid.

Sir Michael then appealed to the Sikhs, as a race of men with a fine record of loyalty, to black-ball the rebels as unworthy of the people. The community confirmed their loyalty to the Government, although the remnants of the revolutionary party grew desperate at these signs of integrity. Repeated acts of terrorism were the order of the day. But



they did little to cow the high-spirited Sikhs ! In fact, they acted upon them in just the reverse way to which the revolutionaries had anticipated. Bands of Sikhs swore they would justify the ancient name of fidelity which was being so grossly besmirched by the efforts of unscrupulous seditionists.

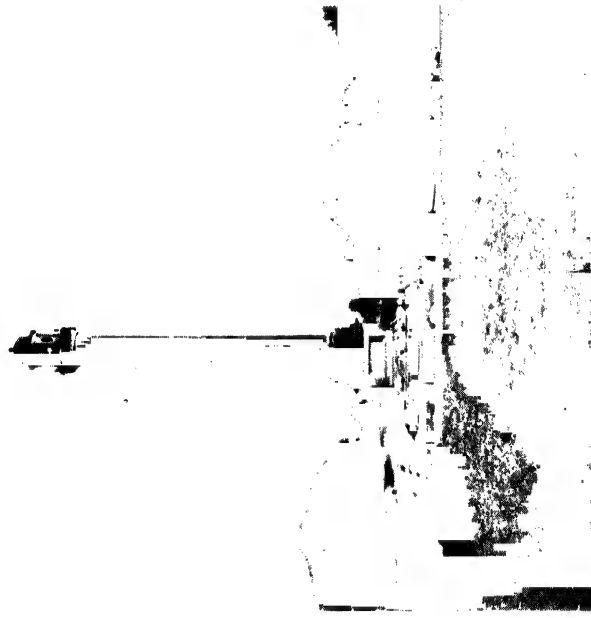
In June 1915 a party of eight revolutionaries were dispatched with instructions to attack the guards of a railway bridge near Amritsar for the purpose of capturing the guards' rifles and ammunition for use in another conspiracy. On the night of the eleventh of June they attacked the guard, killed two of its members, and carried off four rifles and a quantity of ammunition.

An exciting hunt ensued. The Sikhs, loyal to their work, gave chase to the murderers, who rushed off for the ferry over the Beas River. Shooting a ferryman the conspirators piled into his boat, sniping the while at their pursuers. The Sikhs managed to cross the river, and the chase was resumed. After running, ducking, and dodging, in which process one of the pursuers was killed, the Sikhs captured five of the rebels, who were handed over to the police. Later two more were caught. Of the seven, one turned approver, and the others were hanged.

In August 1915 the rebellion was on its last legs. The leaders had been captured or had fled, the Sikhs had renounced the whole sordid business, and law and order were once more restored to the Punjab. One hundred and seventy-five persons were accused of conspiring against the Government, and of these thirty-eight were sentenced to death. Eventually only twenty were hanged, the remaining eighteen death sentences being commuted to life transportation. Fifty-eight were transported for life or imprisoned, and 115 were ordered to forfeit property. The majority of these sentences, however, were remitted.



TAJ MAHAL, AGRA



COLONEL HENRY MARTIN'S  
MONUMENT, LUCKNOW



## INDIA ON THE EVE OF SEDUCTION

When the War came to an end only six of the revolutionaries were still detained. These were incurable cases. But the rule was not tyrannic, but just. Once more back in their homes, they forgot politics and returned to the simple life of the land.

Two years later the world was to be startled by a trial of Indian revolutionaries in the United States of America. In August 1917 the leading Indian anarchists in America were rounded up and charged with conspiring 'to set on foot a military enterprise to be carried on against India within the United States, the objects of the enterprise being to incite mutiny and armed rebellion in India, to obstruct Great Britain in the prosecution of the war against Germany.'

The amazing feature of the trial was the way in which the revolutionary activities were linked up with the German Embassy in the United States, and, of course, through the Embassy to the German Government in Berlin.

In 1914 it is stated a 'Committee of Indian Revolutionaries' had been formed in Berlin by Indians and the German Foreign Secretary, Zimmerman. This body, it is alleged, had really been at the bottom of all the revolutionary trouble, in the Pacific ports of the United States and Canada, had financed the seditious activities and dictated the rough policy. A Siamese expedition was to have been organized in which the revolutionaries, trained by German officers, were to mass on the Burmo-Siamese frontier and pour into India. But the plans went wrong and came to nothing.

In 1917 the remaining revolutionaries in America were rounded up by the police and all were convicted. The trial ended on a melodramatic note, for a conspirator, named Ram Singh, shot Ram Chandra as he was leaving the dock. Immediately a police-

man whipped out a revolver and shot Ram Singh where he stood, his gun still smoking. So two revolutionaries paid the supreme penalty.

During February 1915 another rebellion had broken out in the Punjab. Just as the critical stages of the rebellion were being entered upon, the Moslems of the south-west Punjab, of Jhang, Multan, and Muzaffargarh, rose against the Hindus.

The causes were these : inflation and higher prices had driven the Mohammedan peasantry even more into the arms of the avaricious Hindu moneylenders of the towns, the despised, greedy rascals who always strove to bleed the Moslems white. The Hindus would not allow the Moslems credit, and indignation and hate grew, fanned by Moslem ' rags.'

Then the rumour got round that the British were beaten, that the Germans and Turks were vanquishing the proud conquerors of India, and that within a few weeks they would be pouring into the country.

It was a Sunday afternoon. The flag which normally would have flown from the Government offices had been furled and taken inside.

' Look,' went up a cry, ' the British have gone ! '

Shouting and clamour broke out. The confused, struggling Mohammedan mob, urged on by leaders who had sprang miraculously from nowhere, rushed on.

' To the moneylenders.' The cry was taken up by a thousand throats. The peasants believed that now the British had gone the country was theirs to do in as they wished.

On surged the Moslem crowds, smashing in Hindu shops, kicking and hitting Hindus, until they came to the shops of the moneylenders. Some of the owners had fled, but one was dragged from his house.

Other Moslems rushed on, the fierce fanaticism which seizes the sons of Allah on these critical

occasions taking them in a frenzied grip. Pillaging, ransacking, looting, burning, beating, they did not hold their hand until the victory was complete, and no Hindus were left to conquer. Many lay senseless, dead or wounded on the ground. The rest had fled.

For a month sudden fierce flare-ups of this character continued in south-west Punjab. The simple-minded, credulous Moslems, trusting the words of their leaders and the distorted Press, burst into rioting and pillaging.

The two leaders of the insurgents took the titles of 'Kaiser' and 'Crown Prince.' It was almost as though these simple folk were playing soldiers on a large scale. The sight of the 'Kaiser' with his aide-de-camp, the 'Crown Prince,' must have been an amusing sight. Nevertheless, they seem to have taken their work seriously enough, for within the month they were at large they perpetrated fifty robberies and amassed a large fortune in loot.

But great men fall suddenly, and with the coming of the armed police the stars of these two bravadoes waned and vanished.

The rebellion was quenched, like a fire over which a bucket of water had been poured.

Then toll was taken of the damage caused by one month of unrest. The loss of life had been small. Only five of the Hindus and seven Moslems had been killed. But the damage to property had been great. No British property had been touched, but the Hindus had suffered badly. Nearly every shop had been rifled, if not damaged in an irreparable manner.

Over five thousand Moslems were arrested for the outrages and eight hundred were brought before the Multan Tribunal.

## CHAPTER V

### TURMOIL, FEUD, AND STRIFE

**A**FTER the 'Ghadr' rebellion had subsided peace reigned once more over the Punjab. But it was not to be for long. The revolutionaries had seen the damage they could do by stirring up trouble. They still had confidence in themselves and their ineffable aims.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme was then declared and the seditionists and revolutionaries who had been interned in prison were let free. These included the famous Dr. Annie Besant, who with her theories and paper legends brought the torch of Home Rule to India. She gained support from many Indians, to whom the troubles of the early war years were now a dim dream.

The subjugation of Turkey after the war had roused the Mohammedan Indians to a state of nervous tension. Frequent speculation as to the fate of one of Islam's States went on. The liberation of Egypt, Syria, and Iraq encouraged the Hindus to ask, sometimes to yell, for Home Rule in India.

These were the two main reasons for the uniting of the Moslems and Hindus in the after-years of the war. The unity was marked in the Northern Punjab. There a Mohammedan from Kashmir and a Hindu surgeon started anti-Government agitation. In December 1918 the Indian Congress met and denounced all progressive reforms that the Government were attempting to make.

There was little doubt that further attempts at

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rebellion were on foot. Gandhi had proclaimed that he intended to 'bring the Government to its knees,' and sedition was being worked up in Northern India with a view to throwing a spanner in the most delicate part of the Indian machinery—the Punjab.

Then came the chance to rebel. On 18 March 1919 the Rowlatt Bill became law. It was framed to put a stop to revolutionary activities, and at once the mischief-makers seized on it as the spark they needed to set the Indian bonfire alight.

Passive resistance was formulated by Gandhi to be the first step in this protest against the British. The Congress and Khilafat, Hindu and Mohammedan societies of all sorts, the Arya Samaj, and the journalists, lawyers, and students of the more extreme types formed up for the 'war without blood!' The Punjab waited in expectation to see the result of Gandhi's new weapon.

The Rowlatt Bill was passed on 18 March, and Gandhi's campaign opened on the 23rd. The first step was to proclaim a stoppage of work (*hartal*) for the following Sunday, 30 March, throughout the Punjab, which for that purpose included Delhi. Somebody got the dates mixed, so that actually the *hartal* only occurred in Delhi, Amritsar, and Multan, and a few of the smaller towns. But the results of passive resistance in Delhi were quite enough for one day's work.

There 'passive resistance' worked very well until the strikers found that they had some 'blackleggers' in their midst. Delhi station is always a busy spot, and Sunday is no exception. Consequently the sweet, cigarette, and chocolate sellers did not see why they should stop their trade because Gandhi had proclaimed a strike. But the strikers thought otherwise, and the resistance, that had been dubbed passive, became suddenly violently active. Gandhi must have been a humorist or he would have seen



long before his first campaign just where the paths of passive resistance led.

The station vendors were damned if they were going to stop work. The pacifists were equally certain that they would be damned if they didn't.

The mob of resisters came on ; the vendors held firm ; a fierce fight followed in which the hordes of strikers tried to 'persuade' the vendors they were wrong. The station was damaged, so were the vendors. Sticks, stones, and other articles were hurled with abuse. But even passive resistance cannot last for ever. So Gandhi's followers found out when the police arrived.

They assaulted them just as they had the vendors, but when the troops were called up and the magistrate ordered them to fire, the mob gave ground, leaving a few of their comrades dead outside the station. Again the mob charged the police ; another volley from the troops and more dead bodies joined the others. Then the rioters thought fit to disperse. But it was not for a long time that order was finally imposed in Delhi once again. Frequent were the street-corner fights, police charges, extremist meetings. The whole city lived in excitement and apprehension. But as quickly as it had begun the trouble ceased.

The success of 'passive resistance' led Gandhi to organize another *hartal* for 6 April (again a Sunday). But the posters told the other side of 'passive resistance' before the *hartal* started. In Lahore, for instance, strikers were exhorted to 'kill or die.' The British officials at Lahore were even informed by the resisters that there would be a rebellion, and 'to be prepared.'

Sir Michael O'Dwyer decided to arrest the boldest of the extremists, and 'the sixth' passed without bloodshed. But hysteria was running high throughout the Punjab. The pamphlets which the Government

had printed to explain the Rowlatt Act were burned or torn to shreds. The Moslem leader and Satya Pal were at Amritsar and inciting, exhorting, emboldening the populace to rebellion. The situation was critical. Sir Michael ordered the garrison at Amritsar to be strengthened, but by the time his request reached the Military Command, the outbreak had already started. However, the agitators had been removed to a less inflammatory district by that time.

Then the news came through that Gandhi intended to come up to the Punjab to see the fun. Immediately he was forbidden to do so. The police boarded his train before it reached the Punjab, telling him that he had been directed to return to Bombay. Gandhi was wise enough to obey these instructions.

Plans were being worked out by the revolutionaries to incite the Army, the police, the rural population, the North-West Frontier tribes, in fact everybody, to rebellion against the Government. It was a good thing that the Forces, sworn in allegiance to the Crown, fulfilled their promise in those trying days. The rural population, besides the police and the Army, remained loyal to their protectors.

The rebels, no doubt, knowing that Sir Michael O'Dwyer was leaving the Punjab in a few weeks, thought that all his precise instructions and threats were mere bluff. Nothing could have been more stupid on their part. When Sir Michael warned them, he did not mean that because he was leaving shortly his warnings would be disobeyed. As ever, he lived up to his word.

Amritsar was the first storm centre. It was inevitable after the amount of work the agitators had put in there. When orders came through that they were to be removed from the city, a great howl of indignation and dismay went up. It was this action that precipitated the outbreak. On 10 April the mob formed and closed in on the Civil Station (the

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quarters of the British). Before reaching the station from the town of Amritsar a bridge had to be crossed. On it was a small picket which attempted to hold back the mob. Stones, sticks, and other projectiles were thrown at the picket, which retaliated with rifle-fire. The mob then decided to kill every European in the city. A woman missionary was seized, dragged into the street, beaten to death and left for the mob to trample upon. Mission schools were set on fire while teachers and pupils were inside, banks were looted and the bank managers burned, the goods station was set on fire and a British official was assassinated. The passenger station was attacked, but the Gurkhas, whom General Dyer had sent to Amritsar, saved it bravely with only the help of their *khukris*. The telegraph office was attacked, looted, and burned, and the telegraph master faced death, to be rescued by Indian troops. The Town Hall was fired, railway trains and offices were raided, looted, and burned.

Terror and mob rule reigned in Amritsar. British authority for the time was no more. On the morning of 13 April the railway line outside the city was torn up. All along the track stations had been looted. Inside the city British residents had been gathered into the fort.

General Dyer arrived in Amritsar on 11 April. He determined he would let the rebels see that he was now strong enough to combat their control of the town. The inhabitants had been warned that if they continued to hold meetings, they would be fired on. To make sure that the position was understood, General Dyer commanded that a proclamation be read in the most important streets of Amritsar, warning the people against meetings. That was on the morning of the 13th. The same morning news was brought to him that the rebels intended to call a meeting that afternoon at half-past four,

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in the Jallianwallah Bagh. This is a square, enclosed on three sides by brick walls, and approachable by means of a narrow alley. You could compare it to the Mersey at Liverpool, the square as the water forming the harbour, the alley as the bottle-neck through which the ships pass to reach the open sea.

On hearing of the meeting the General assembled a hastily improvised force and, at its head, marched to the meeting-place.

General Dyer, in his report to General Beynon, states that

‘on entering (the Jallianwallah Bagh) I saw a dense crowd, estimated at about 5,000; a man on a raised platform addressing the audience and making gesticulations with his hands.

‘I realized that my force was small and to hesitate might induce attack. I immediately opened fire and dispersed the mob. I estimate that between 200 and 300 of the crowd were killed. My party fired 1650 rounds.’

From that moment, order was once more imposed on the city. No one dared fire another shot. In Amritsar, at any rate, the rebellion was crushed.

But the trouble had been started, and was spreading to other parts of the Punjab. Lahore went through a period nearly as terrible as that at Amritsar.

The mob at first adopted precisely the same tactics as their brothers in Amritsar had done—they assembled to attack the Civil Station. Sir Michael O'Dwyer sent to the Lahore Cantonment, five miles away, for troops. He says of the situation :

‘Meanwhile we in Lahore, who knew what had happened at Amritsar a few hours before and what was likely to happen on an infinitely greater scale in Lahore if military aid was delayed, went through

some hours of the most terrible suspense. I had asked for the troops about two o'clock. About five o'clock I heard of the collection of the city mobs. Up to 6.30 I had no news of the arrival of the troops. At 6.45 I got hold of the District Magistrate (Mr. Fyson) and the Superintendent of Police (Mr. Broadway). Messages had come in that the mobs were moving on the Civil Station ; from my veranda I could hear their ominous cries,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles off, and there was only a small body of armed police to block their way. I sent the two officers in a motor to take charge of the body of Indian police holding the Mall which links the city to the Civil Station, with instructions to parley with the mob, hold them up as long as possible, induce them, if possible, to return to the city, and, if they persisted in the attempt to force their way through, to use force to disperse them. I ascertained that the police were armed with buck-shot, and I said that if they had to fire there was to be no firing in the air. We could afford to take no risks where the safety of thousands of women and children was at stake. Meantime, on the suggestion of Mr. Montgomery, the Chief Engineer, we collected all the women and children who could be got together at Government House, where there was a small military and police-guard, both Indian. We kept them there till we heard that the troops had arrived and the mobs had been driven back to the city.'

The mob was advancing on the Civil Station and attempting to wrest the firearms from police who were holding them back. One British officer was knocked down, to be instantly rescued by other British policemen. The police were then ordered to fire by the magistrate. One or two Indians were killed and several injured. Then the mob retreated.

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Another mob was trying to force the Telegraph Station where a batch of soldiers had been posted. But the mob was being driven all the time back into the city. Other hands, thousands strong, joined them. They proceeded to stone the police and the troops, while all the time they were being pushed back into the city.

The city had to be left in the hands of the mob until 12 April. Then Colonel Jackson entered with a force of policemen and soldiers. The work of reinstating authority in the city proceeded with an absolute minimum of loss of life. Taking control once again, the British guarded the waterworks and the gates.

That night Sir Michael was to receive a deputation from the Punjab martial races. He was advised, as the country was in a grave situation, to postpone the engagement. But Sir Michael says, in going through with what he had said he would do that 'I thought it wise . . . as it gave me an opportunity of telling these loyal men the situation which had arisen, and of invoking their co-operation in dealing with it.'

He called the leading men of the Province to a conference the next morning. Thirty or forty of them came. 'It was a critical occasion and gave one the opportunity of seeing how men are tested by a crisis,' Sir Michael states. Only two of the delegates suggested negotiations with the rebels. The rest were emphatic in their opinion that drastic action by the Government was needed.

Instructions were issued advising the Lahore people to obey the law and avoid political meetings. It was not what Sir Michael wanted.

Later a rebellious meeting was held in the Badshahi Mosque. A Sikh ex-sepoy spun a tale about mutiny among the British troops, that five hundred British had been killed. He himself, he asserted,

had killed six. This effort, which was highly applauded, was followed by more seditious speeches and the meeting ended with the assembled crowd stamping on the pictures of King George V and Queen Mary. Declaring that the Kaiser was their sovereign and calling on the police to betray the British they went out into the streets to attempt to 'persuade' people and bring off a *hartal* at the railway workshops.

The rebels then attempted to come to terms with Sir Michael O'Dwyer. Needless to say their terms were impossible, and Sir Michael would have no truck with them.

But at this time serious trouble had broken out twenty-five miles from Lahore at a place called Kasur. The railway station had been besieged by a mob of Indians who had held up the trains and perpetrated some terrible atrocities on the British there.

This mob had killed two British warrant officers, almost succeeded in battering two officers and two non-commissioned officers to pieces, and attacked a British lady travelling with her three children. But for the courage of a Mohammedan railway inspector, Khair Din, the latter would have been slaughtered. Shielding them, he rushed them to a hut near the station and defended it until the mob went away. The telegraph wires were cut, the station was burnt, battered, and looted. Government buildings were attacked and the Civil Court was fired.

This example of revolt, from a small town in the Punjab, shows how the fierce spirit of fanaticism and murder sweeps from place to place suddenly, like a raging tornado, swirling people away with it to obey its commands.

On the evening of the 12th Sir Michael O'Dwyer telephoned the Government at Simla, speaking of

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the grave situation in the Punjab. The Government replied by stating that if Sir Michael gave instructions that rifle-fire was to be used and that if the troops 'had to fire they should make an example.'

The systematic attacks on telegraph stations, Government buildings, and goods stations in Lahore, Amritsar, and Kasur seemed to form part of a premeditated plan of action. In the mob there must have been leaders with their instructions as to what buildings to attack and when to do it.

On 13 April General Dyer settled matters in Amritsar. The next day the following dramatic message reached Sir Michael O'Dwyer.

'Hartal and disturbances going on. Mob active, more expected. Bridges on either side of station burnt. Police insufficient. Military arrangements required.'

It was from the Indian Deputy-Commissioner at Gujranwala. He had managed to get to a telegraph station eight miles out of Gujranwala, all wires into the city having been cut.

What had happened was that some influential Indians in the town had made use of revolutionary plotters to stir up sedition amongst the people. The mob set fire to railway property, churches, Government and other European buildings. Clever plans ensured that all communications would be cut off as one of the first revolutionary strokes, thus leaving the city completely isolated. The only magistrate there was an Indian, and he, unused to quick decisions and unnerved by the responsibility placed on his shoulders by the revolt, forbade the troops to fire until the revolt had reached a pitch when bullets only served as additional fuel to the flames.

The few Europeans were gathered into the treasury buildings. The Indian magistrate then



made his desperate bid for reinforcements by travelling eight miles out to a telegraph station, from where he could get news through to the Punjab administration.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer immediately ordered that troops should be sent through to Gujranwala. But no troops were available. Sir Michael suggested that aeroplanes should be sent, and if necessary machine-guns and bombs were to be used.

Flying over the city, the aeroplanes swooped down on the mob which was by this time attacking the jail and soon dispersed it by the use of bullets and bombs. In all not more than twelve people were killed by the action, only two of the bombs which fell exploding.

The rebels stampeded for cover. It was the last time they dared to defy the law. Late that night some troops arrived and Lieutenant-Colonel O'Brien was detailed to take charge of the city. Eighteen ringleaders of the revolt were arrested and it was seen that the plot had been very deep and insidious. These men formed the brains of the town, lawyers and prominent merchants. They were sent up for trial to the Punjab High Court.

By now the seeds that had been sown in Amritsar and Lahore had spread across the length and breadth of the Punjab. Agitators and emissaries found their way across the country, sowing unrest and urging men on to the 'glorious revolution.' Small towns became the centres of revolt and sedition. Railway lines were torn up. Stations were looted and burned. Honest country-folk were terrorized with threats. The hysteria spread, bringing a frenzy of maniacal joy to some and to others—panic and uneasiness.

At Lyallpur the agitators, knowing the loyalty of the Sikhs there, had to think of something pretty desperate to make them rise against the British.

They chose to spread the rumour that the famous

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Sikh Temple at Amritsar, the centre of the Sikh religion, had been pillaged by our troops and that our soldiers had outraged the Sikh girls there.

Thus appeared notices of this description (quoted by the Hunter Committee) :

‘ O Sikhs, die or drown yourselves in the tank of the Deputy-Commissioner’s bungalow as your daughters were dishonoured at the hands of the sweepers. Allow your young men to take revenge.’

Mr. G. de Montmorency, who was then Deputy-Commissioner, gathered all the Europeans into the civil stations and sent out patrols on the roads leading into Lyallpur in case the Sikhs, inflamed by the untruthful messages, chose to raid the town.

During the time before the troops arrived such notices as the following were posted up :

‘ . . . The treatments meted out to our girls at Amritsar are unbearable and we cannot expose them. It is very sad that all our brethren are keeping silent at this moment.

‘ What are you waiting for now ? There are many (European) ladies here to dishonour. Go all round India, clear the country of the ladies and those sinful creatures and then will the time come when we can all say together : “ Blessed be the Hindus, Mohammedans, and Sikhs.” ’

On 17 April troops arrived from Multan, and Lyallpur was once more restored to order.

Critical as the situation was throughout the Punjab, the rebellion did not ripen into the ghastly carnage that some of its leaders evidently hoped it would. Sir Michael O’Dwyer gives the following as one of the reasons :

‘ The troops were welcomed by the loyal rural populations . . . and were able, generally, to give

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confidence to the loyal and overawe the malcontents and disturbers of the peace.

‘I believe the timely appearance of these columns, on and after 14 April, was a main factor in keeping the country-side steady and in preventing the Ghadr Sikhs, of whom there were some thousands in the affected districts, from joining the rebellion.’

Attempts made on the loyalty of the Sikhs were thus combated. There was another danger too. That was the degree of loyalty of the native troops. Everything depended on them. Luckily they held firm.

Evidence of the master-hand behind the plotters was shown in the systematic way the rebels attacked the railways, their staffs, and the telegraphic offices. If all communications could be cut, the rebellion could be isolated, and before the British had time to make a move, all the towns in the Punjab would have set up their native councils to rule for themselves. This would have created a position well on the way towards a revolutionary State.

Starting on 10 April the rebels attempted, by every means possible, by persuasive speech, by warnings, threats, and terrorization, to make the staffs of the railway strike. No one can realize, except those who were governing the Punjab at the time, the terrific pressure that was brought to bear upon the railway staffs and the anxiety it caused.

In their efforts to achieve an absolute isolation of every town in the Punjab the revolutionaries can be said to have achieved a fair amount of success.

On 11 April a railway signalman wired from Lahore to Delhi, urging the railway staffs at Delhi to strike. He said that Lahore was in the hands of the mob and that looting had started.

The word was passed round that a railway strike

was fixed for 14 April, and the Punjab railway staff stopped work. However, Sir Michael O'Dwyer asked the Government 'to sanction martial law for all railway lands in the Province.'

This was refused, but the revolutionaries, either having picked up Sir Michael's message or by a clever piece of guesswork, thought that martial law was coming at any moment. The mass movement of the strikers ceased. One or two cases of individual robbery by members of railway staffs occurred after that date, but no mob rule was enforced. Even then night running of trains was suspended, and every train carried an armed guard.

And so the rebellion subsided, gradually. For many days to come there were repeated acts of lawlessness. All over the Punjab Indians had not forgotten the unique opportunities that these revolts had given them for pillaging and looting. But once again, as communications were set into normal condition, and as the ideas that revolt left in Indian minds faded and vanished, law and order were reinstated.

Then came the Hunter Committee to inquire into the rebellion. Their decisions and reports finally closed another tragic chapter in Indian history in which many Englishmen, and foremost among them Sir Michael O'Dwyer, gallantly determined that the British Raj should not fall.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE HORRORS OF THE MOPLAH REBELLION

**M**ISCEGENATION, as the Aryans thousands of years ago found out, breeds a poor and unhealthy people. In 1921 miscegenation again brought trouble, for it brewed the most revolting and inhuman of rebellions ever perpetrated in India.

After the war the Moslems were considerably agitated about the treatment meted out to Turkey in the Peace Treaty. The 'Caliphate' movement sought, through stirring Islamic uneasiness over the fate of some of the Moslem countries after the war, to usurp, or at any rate threaten, British power in India.

For this reason the ultra-faithful were said to be continually stirring up agitation in their Bombay journals. And because these leaders had good connections with the local hot-heads and Mohammedan fanatics, Gandhi thought that he was establishing a fruitful contact in making friends with them.

So this miscegenation, this uniting of two opposed religious beliefs, led to what the instigators, in sincerity, believed would be a stronger anti-British movement. In reality it led to a ghastly rebellion.

When Vasco da Gama discovered India in 1498 the first he saw of her mist-wreathed shores was the coast of Malabar. And the first people he met, as the monsoons started, were the Moplahs. Whether he was impressed by them we do not know. But any boat, passing round the Cape of Good Hope

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from European waters, and carried by the winds, would first strike that coast of Malabar.

The Malabar coast extends from the southernmost tip of India, Cape Comorin, almost to Portuguese Goa. The hills that shelter the coast are covered with dense, impenetrable jungle. During the summer months the monsoon rains teem down and Malabar is damp and sticky, and extremely uncomfortable to Europeans. During the winter months the climate is a little more equable.

Malabar was inhabited in the times of Buddha by Dravidian peoples. They were primitive, far more so than the Aryans who were conquering their country, and as time went on, and Buddhism became a spent force, they took over some of the customs of their Hindu neighbours and pieces of their religion.

In A.D. 800 invasion threatened Malabar. Arab traders, seeking new lands, settled along the coast. They were Mohammedans, fiery and fanatical in religion, tolerating no insults to their beliefs. They took wives from the native population, and so the Moplah race grew up a mixed race, ignorant, superstitious, credulous, given to sudden and even barbaric actions.

These were the people Vasco da Gama found, as the first European to sail to India via the Cape, when he landed there six or seven hundred years after the Arab invasion.

The first trading stations were set up there. The Portuguese came, the French, and the British as well. So the Moplahs, the most intolerant race in India, were the first race to tolerate the sea-born whites.

Calicut, a flourishing seaport on the Malabar coast, is the centre of Moplah country, and a small detachment of soldiers is kept there.

The Moplahs have their main source of industry in the soil they have salvaged from the hunger of the

fertile jungle. They live by tilling the soil. But the soil is not theirs. It belongs to the Hindus, their landlords. This has been an everlasting bone of contention between the Mohammedans, the tenants, and the Hindus, the landlords.

Round about the years 1850-55 the feeling became so intense that the Government were forced to pass a Bill forbidding the possession of knives among the Moplah peoples. This again led to outrages, and many were the old scores paid off by the Moplahs. In those troublesome years the Chief Magistrate himself was assassinated.

In 1896 revolt again broke out and these fierce people showed fanatical bravery in their engagements with the British. In one action hundreds of Moplahs were killed in a suicidal advance only paralleled by the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava. The massacre was completed by the extra loss of life caused by the Moplahs ensuring that not one of their wounded followers was left alive on the field of battle.

But the Moplahs, in between their battle excursions, lived peaceful enough lives. There were the usual number of Islam's sons who felt the 'religious murder' upon them, and went out in search of human life. But on the whole they seemed to live on in their ignorant, sullen ways, careless of revolts.

I say seemed, because the whole of the Moplah country, except for a few seaboard towns, is steeped in mystery. The jungle is so impenetrable, the communications so meagre on account of the difficulties in the way of any trail-blazing railway or road pioneer, that Moplah land has been left to rot by itself. Who knows, even to-day, what goes on in the dense impenetrable jungle that towers above the coastal plain and in which no European ever ventures?

In 1921, to the seaboard towns and villages, where

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dwelling Europeans, came seditionists and agitators. They were from the Bombay province and evidently were not particular in which corner of India they stirred trouble, as long as they were making a fuss somewhere. It has been said that from this source was to come the spark which was to set all India afire. But if it was a sign for a nation, the nation heeded it not. The revolution itself formed a veiled, horrible orgy. As the start of a wider rebellion, it was a failure.

Hindu leaders, determined to explore every corner in their efforts to usurp British rule, settled on the Malabar coast as a likely spot. Moslems and Hindus. . . . Hindus and Moslems. . . . A primitive, ignorant race with a grievance against their masters and a grievance against their rulers.

The treatment which Turkey received at the end of the war, coupled with the ruthlessness of the Hindu landlords, formed two perfectly sound reasons why trouble should be stirred up in Malabar.

The Hindu leaders had no especial love for the Moslems as such. Oh, no. But the Mohammedans from Moplah formed a people who could be stirred to fanaticism for their purposes. For stirring up trouble against the British there is always ample reward. . . .

So accordingly to Malabar travelled agitators, religious and lay, penetrating into the hidden fastnesses of Moplah land and into the crowded native quarters of the towns, at first mixing with the people, making friends, obtaining some hold over their minds, and then talking sedition in small doses at first, to be followed by larger quantities.

Islam, they said, was suffering. The war had brought its consequences and the countries that had fought the Allies had not suffered too well. Turkey, virtual head of the Mohammedan people, had suffered terribly. It was the British who were at



fault. They had brought this trouble on the good subjects of the Caliph.

The trouble-stirrers would talk of more personal things too, matters that concerned the everyday lives of the Moplah people. Why, asked the seditionists, should the Moplahs have Hindu landlords, parasites living on the honest work of their tenants? Why, indeed? Because the Moplahs had tolerated them too long. They should shake off these ichneumons from their shoulders and rule their lives for themselves, set up a kingdom perhaps, there in a land which they could defend.

But the Moplahs were afraid of these drastic suggestions. What of the British? they asked. Would not the great armies fall upon them with guns and bullets and kill them? Would they not find themselves worse off by attempting to take these steps?

The British? queried the agitators in amazement. The British? No. Every line of their faces showed contempt at such a suggestion. The British were afraid of the Indians. They would take no steps at stopping such a rebellion. What happened in the Punjab after the glorious revolt? Had not the officials been accused of unnecessary brutality in dealing with the revolt? Were not all British officials frightened of taking action in stopping revolts because of the rebuffs they would suffer from the Government, when their actions became known?

It was true. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who had shouldered the responsibility for the Punjab rebellion, had suffered at the hands of the very people who should have been most grateful to him. His prompt, decisive actions quenched the revolt that would have plunged the Punjab into a flaming land of bloodshed and horror.

People in England did not realize that General Dyer, in killing over three hundred people at

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Amritsar had stopped a rising that eventually might have cost five times that number of lives.

One of the reasons for the horrors of the Moplah rebellion was that the Government were afraid of official censure of their actions. As the agitators said, Lord Reading's Central Government was afraid to act. Despite the entreaties of Lord Willingdon at Madras when the Moplahs were being stirred out of their slumbers and into action, the Central Government failed to take any decisive step.

Lord Willingdon seemed the only man in India who realized the portent of the storm clouds gathering along the Malabar coast. At the time he was governor of Madras. It was from this position that events could best be watched. While the unrest was growing daily, he sent repeated messages to the Central Government urging action.

As Lieutenant-General Sir George MacMunn says in his book, *Turmoil and Tragedy in India* :

‘ Government, too anxious to wrap itself in a white sheet when it seemed that the suppression of rebellion in the Punjab was unpopular, issued some contradictory and foolish regulations regarding the use of force by troops. The old rule was a good one, viz., that when the Civil authority is powerless, then rebellion and a state of war necessarily exist. That clear issue had now been obscured. It did not make the treatment of the approaching trouble easier, nor did it make the hiding of your head in the sand a sound policy.’

It seemed as though the British, for once, had lost the incentive to take decisive action. Rumbings, growing even louder came from a vast population which could, of a sudden, turn into dangerous maniacs. The rumbings were not heeded. The trouble continued to brew, a sullen muttering cloud

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which eclipsed the brightness of the skies, a cloud which would belch forth its torrential outburst.

Then, at last, a timid feeble action was taken, an action so indecisive that it had led not to a cessation of trouble as was anticipated, but acted as fuel to flames. It was the spark that set the whole country alight, formed just that extra impetus needed to put the people at war with the Government.

The order for a house to house search was issued, so that rifles and knives that the Moplahs were believed to be hiding could be collected. At Pukkotur the police attempted to enforce these measures, but were overpowered. At Tirurangadi the District Magistrate was overpowered by the Moplahs and had to withdraw to Calicut, itself in a critical state. Here the District Magistrate telegraphed for ships and was informed that H.M.S. *Comus* was on its way.

On 23 August 1921 *The Times* correspondent at Madras stated that

‘it appears that the trouble with the Moplahs was the result of a widespread and dangerous organisation promoted by agitators who for some time past have been working on the religious fanaticism of the more ignorant of the Moplahs, and that it was brought to a head by the decision of the Government to arrest the leading seditionists.

‘A communique on the subject refers to seditionist propaganda, and states that two months ago volunteers were formed wearing a kind of uniform. The Government eventually sanctioned the prosecution of the leaders, and with this object in view a magistrate arrived at Tirurangadi on 20th inst., accompanied by a party of troops and police. Later 3,000 armed Moplahs approached the town and when the magistrate went out to

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disperse them fire was opened. There were a number of casualties, and 20 arrests were made.'

By now revolt had flared up along the whole of the Malabar coast. The railway lines were torn up, stations burned, and murder followed. At Parappanqadi, five thousand Moplahs burnt a railway station and killed a policeman and army officer, both British.

The Government, wakened from its ineptitude, began to rush troops to the emergency area. At Pukkotur two hundred Leinsters engaged with a mob of enraged Moplahs and four hundred Moplahs were left dead. It was reported in *The Times* that 'the fury of the rebels was so great that even wounded men continued to fight and rushed through Lewis gunfire to the points of British bayonets.'

But amidst the smoke and blood of the battlefield the Moplahs had not forgotten Islam. Attempts were made to set up the 'Caliphate Kingdom of Malabar' as knowing no allegiance to the British Government.

While the British were away, the Moplahs got on with the job of terrorizing the Hindus, against whom they harboured a very old, and very sore, grievance.

From the shrouds that enveloped the land of mystery came terrible and inhuman stories of men who, seized by the fanatical fury which grips every Moslem when his faith is at stake (or when he thinks it is), spared none in the savagery that seized them.

Brutal and bestial were these crimes, only befitting men who had cunningly worked on the worst of human passions. Every Hindu knew the meaning of fear during those dark months when the Moplahs held sway over the Malabar coast.

Lives were taken in a frenzy of madness, in a heedless primitive way.

The Moplah religious leaders, more fanatical than their followers, urged their brothers on to deeds of greater violence and horror. Men were flayed alive, skinned alive, their skins used to adorn Hindu shrines and temples in the places of the flowers once placed there by the worshippers.

One story is told of a Hindu priest, alone in a sacred temple in a remote part of Malabar. The temple was typical of Hindu architecture, ornate, elaborate, with exotic carvings on the walls. It was dedicated to the God Vishnu.

The Moplahs seized the priest as he was praying before the altar, and attempted to convert him to the Mohammedan religion. But the priest, brought up in the ways of the Brahmins and the sacred Vedas, was obstinate. He would not be converted. Force seemed no use with such a fellow. The Moplahs, infuriated and hypnotized as they were by the words and exhortations of their leaders, dragged the priest over the altar and slew him upon the image of the God whom for so many years he had worshipped.

Elsewhere others were being forcibly circumcised and converted. Before the wells men were decapitated and hurled down into the dank depths. Thousands were thus killed and the wells were filled with the dead and dying, the groaning and the screaming. The edge of the wells became *abattoirs*.

The days of Marat, many people think, go unsurpassed for massacre and brutality. It can be safely said that the Moplahs were even more inhumane than the French Revolutionaries.

When the Central Government decided to take the matter well into hand, they sent Lord Rawlinson to deal with the rebels. He wasted no time in quenching the fires that were burning so luridly amongst the Moplahs. When necessary lives were taken so that order might be restored.

And so the forces of order went on, like a sickle

## THE HORRORS OF THE MOPLAH REBELLION

through the cornfield, reaping a crop of casualties, but smoothing the land once more into some semblance of peace.

At Pandikkah the British woke up one morning to a sudden dawn attack upon the post. Hordes of Moplahs came rushing on to fall upon British bayonets or be killed by British bullets.

Twice the Moplahs were within an ace of capturing the British position, but the commander rallied his men, and the position was held. How desperate the situation was at one time can be imagined from the fact that seventy Moplahs were killed within the post, while nearly two hundred were killed outside. The bravery of the men who guard the Empire's remotest posts was shown that day.

Eventually the 'Caliphate King,' Mohammed Haju, was captured. That knocked the stuffing out of the rebels. From that day on they were an army without a leader. The 'Caliphate Kingdom' collapsed, the rebels were rounded up, and hostilities ceased. The number of rebels to surrender reached amazingly high figures. Altogether 38,250 Moplahs surrendered to the Government forces, 1,600 were wounded, and 2,250 were killed in battle. The number of Moplahs killed was far above the number wounded.

It is instructive to compare the results of the Moplah rebellion, where Governmental actions came tardily, with the Punjab rebellion where the men on the spot waited not for decisions and orders, but did what they knew was right straight away. In other words a comparison between Sir Michael O'Dwyer and the officials in the Malabar region.

Sir Michael took prompt and justifiable action. The spirit of 'wait and see what the Government says' was no part of him. He put his heel on the outbreaks in the Punjab, in the same way as he would have put it on a cigarette-end that had been

dropped in a dangerous place. He had under his responsibility great cities like Lahore and Amritsar, and in which, if the firm hand had not been used, the most awful deeds would have been enacted.

In the Punjab 2,500 people were brought up for trial and 800 of them were convicted. They were dealt with before proper courts. But in Malabar, a country with no cities and with only a fanatical Mohammedan population as the danger, 20,000 people were brought up for trial and 12,000 were convicted, and these were not dealt with by a proper court but by courts martial. In the Punjab the rebels were dealt with by a tribunal of experienced judges.

From this it can be seen that Sir George MacMunn's maxim, 'when the Civil authority is powerless, then rebellion and a state of war necessarily exist,' is a sound one. The blame for the rebellion cannot be laid upon the shoulders of the men who governed Malabar at the time. But it can be laid upon those who criticized the Punjab authorities' actions when the whole of that densely populated region was threatened with strife, and thereby prevented others from taking just those actions which would have stopped bloodshed in Malabar in a few days.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NANKANA ATROCITIES, THE BARBAR AKALI REBELLION AND THE HORRORS OF CAWNPORE

**P**ERNICIOUS secrets are sometimes kept beneath the guise of things so innocent as to be above suspicion. Many are the uses to which religion, for instance, has been put, not all of them, unfortunately, ethical. Henry VIII discovered that through religion he could capture the wealth and the power of the monasteries and sever connections with the Pope. No doubt, in the first place, the suggestion to abolish the monasteries came from someone with the highest principles. But like the wolf, they became clothed in lustreless raiment which boded ill for those sanctuaries of morality and philosophy.

In India a reformation grew up in the year 1921. It was called the Akali Dal, or Army of God, and its main source of grievance was the fact that the Mahants, or abbots of monasteries, were getting enormously rich, and that none of the riches were finding their way into schemes for social amelioration, or anything to better the lot of the common folk. There were, of course, plenty of other grievances, but the fact that the priests were getting rich seemed unjustifiable in the eyes of the people.

When Europe was entering into another epoch of history at the time of the Renaissance, a new religious leader arose in India. His name was Baba Nanak, and he dwelt in the Punjab. His teachings differed from Hinduism in the number of appendances that



had been discarded. Suttee, girl infanticide, and other such horrors of Hinduism were forbidden and an attempt was made to combine the Hindu and Mohammedan religions under a single monotheistic religious belief.

This last effort does not seem to have been particularly successful, but to this day the religion is almost intact and 3,000,000 people come under its sway. They are the Sikhs, the loyal and virile inhabitants of the Punjab. Sikhism has its centre in the famous Golden Temple at Amritsar.

Years went by, and later a more militant form of Sikhism, named Singhism, grew up. This acted in much the same way as the 'Puritan Purge' of the English Church in the seventeenth century. It was a sterner creed and said that five acts should be carried out by its followers. These were measures taken to bring into use once more the hereditary customs of the Sikhs, notably in apparel.

This revival was not to the liking of many Sikhs, who stayed beyond the pale of such devotion. They were known as Nankani Sikhs, non-Singhs, to whom religion was not such a life-and-death matter as it was to the Singhs. They were to cause their brothers considerable trouble later on.

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, the Government went ahead with a policy of irrigating the Punjab and generally bringing it to a state of fertility. Certain monastery abbots of the non-Singh, Nankani type benefited enormously from the fact that their lands had been transformed from barrenness to fertility, their coffers from emptiness to fullness.

Numerous as their heavenly desires may have been, they were not above earthly ones as well. With their increasing wealth they followed not the teachings of the good Nanak, but used the money for their own ends. For instance, it was generally

acknowledged that one religious leader kept a half-dozen or so mistresses. Polygamy is not unusual in India, but for a mahant to keep a small-sized harem was an act which provoked the Sikhs to righteous indignation.

The ducking-stool was a favourite punishment of the Puritans for wayward girls, but how a clergyman found living with six mistresses would have been dealt with by the austere Puritans is a matter too terrible to be dwelt on.

Rumours circulated concerning the doings of this man, rumours which found sympathetic and indignant ears among the Sikhs. What happened to him eventually is not known, but his crimes were only one of the grievances which led finally to the atrocities at Nankana.

Among the Singh reformers was a small coterie of genuine reformers, eager to banish wantonness for ever and establish Singhism in the place where Sikhism had ruled.

Unfortunately some of their comrades had different ideas. The main reason for their becoming disciples in the Army of God seems to have been jealousy, coupled with the chance of making trouble. Rapacious ruffians, bloodthirsty brigands, and other 'bad-hats' turned out for the Army. The exclusiveness of the Army certainly deteriorated. The loss in prestige, however, was balanced by the gain in decisiveness which the avaricious always urged.

Then matters started to move very fast. An example of their methods is afforded by the attack on a certain monastery which was regarded as one of the most bejewelled in the whole Sikh constellation. It was renowned for its wealth and notorious for stories that the abbot lived with a woman not of his own religion, two excellent reasons for terminating its present regime.

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However, the Singhs were not the people to embark upon a voyage of costly legal action. As has been said, the more notorious of them were not particular in the methods which they used to strip the temples of their wealth. One method was as good as another, but the cheapest was the most popular.

So, in 1921, it was decided that the Army of God should march in and seize the monastery while the enemy was sleeping. The plan was adopted and the Army of God, with rifles, staves, and knives, ventured off on their mission.

Meanwhile, behind the walls of the monastery, the abbot had been living with his ear to the ground. He had heard rumours of approaching trouble. All the wealth that he had amassed was to be taken away from him at a stroke. He would rather die than that should happen. No Army of God should seize his beloved sanctuary.

Luckily for him roving bands of ruffians, who can be hired for the hour, day, or month, as required, make a home of the Punjab. The vocation is a profitable one once you have established a reputation. He went to an agent, who communicated his desires to a band of particularly notorious ruffians. These were hired for an unspecified length of time to guard the monastery and to keep any marauder or band of marauders away.

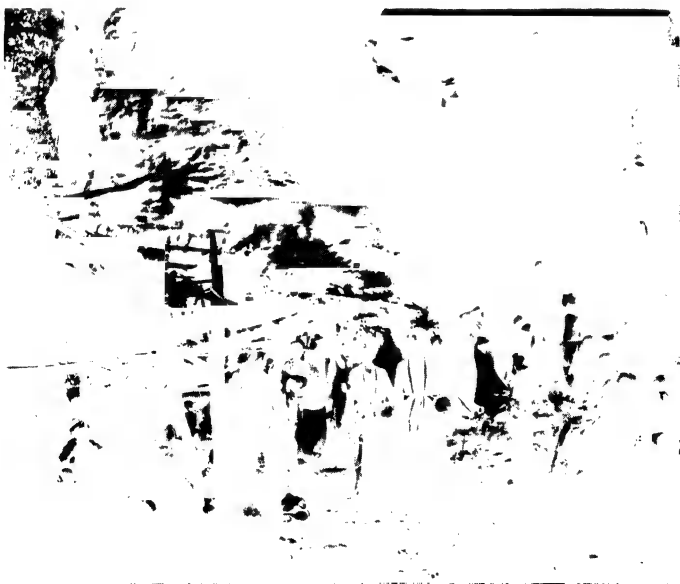
The abbot then spread the news around that he had hired a band of guards to keep watch over his sacred property, and from then on undesirables would be dealt with firmly.

This discouraged the Army of God. Either they would have to scrap the idea of transferring the ownership of the monastery to better hands, or they would have to use force, which they considered unworthy.

Eventually the sanction of armed aggression was



"NANDI," THE SACRED BULL OF SIVA



PILGRIMS ASSEMBLED TO WORSHIP THE GREAT  
STONE IDOL IN THE CAVE AT PACHMARHI MELA



ruled out, the Singhs deciding that the sword *was* an instrument of God.

With satisfied consciences, with pride and utter confidence in their mission, the disciples set out for the monastery. Their appearance could not have been too inspiring or they would not have raised the suspicions they did. As it happened, a woman saw them passing on the way, rushed forward, and told that the Army of God was approaching.

Millions have waited in earnest expectation for the earthly kingdom of God. 'The Kingdom of God is nigh at hand !' The message has saved many. One would have expected the abbot, on hearing of the earthly manifestation of the heavenly legions, to have run forward to greet them. Not he ! Retracing his steps to the monastery he told the leader of the brigands to keep a careful look-out, for danger threatened at any moment.

The expropriators advanced, a kind of righteous communo-religious feeling upon them. They passed through the gates of the monastery in triumphal marching columns, fully expecting to meet little resistance.

The last of them had passed through the gate when a glint on the roof of the monastery told them that the occupants meant business. At the same time the gates clanged to behind them. A bearded ruffian raised himself on the roof and shouted : " Fire ! "

Immediately a score of rifles were levelled over the parapet and a murderous fire was opened on the trapped Singhs below. The Army of God was taken completely by surprise. Some of its disciples rushed back to the gate to try to force it open, but here again they met rifles.

Those who had escaped the slaughter in the courtyard ran for the sanctuary of the shrine, where at least they thought that they would be safe. They

were wrong. A breach was made in the wall and the hired murderers continued their slaughter.

When the last rifle was silent a ghastly scene of massacre was revealed. Of the one hundred and twenty-five Singhs who had ventured to the shrine not one remained whole. Blood lay in pools on the ground round the dead. Blood was smeared on the walls, on the shrine, and on the clothes of the murderers who had not stopped at murder, but had mingled it with robbery. The cries of the dying were mixed with the shouts of triumph of the assassins. It was a fantastic nightmare come true. No heed was paid to the cries of dying and wounded whose blood swelled the pools.

Then the leader gave the signal for the curtain to rise on the last act. His men rushed off into the monastery and returned with tin after tin of oil. This they sprinkled on the woodwork, on the bodies of the dead and dying. A flame sprang up, seized the structure in its grip and continued its deadly course along walls and roofs and over the bodies of the dead. Soon the whole monastery was a blazing inferno. The flesh of over a hundred men was burning, in a stinking, nauseating column of fire and smoke. For miles around the lurid beacon of a dismal carnage told of the deaths of the 'Army of God.'

While the massacre was in process the abbot had been watching, with his mistress, from the roof of the monastery, showering cheers and encouragement on the defenders. The poor old fellow must have been insane to allow the ruffians to use oil and set the monastery alight. Perhaps he had no say in the matter.

One feels sorry for the District Magistrate when he arrived there. The scene, combined with the stench of burning bodies, would have been enough to turn anyone's heart. The abbot was later arrested and transported for life. It was thought that his

actions were performed, though misguidedly, in self-protection. . . .

Under the guise of the new Sikh movement Dacoity sprang up. All over the Punjab messages were sent to the Government, telling of the increase in the number of these crimes. Once more terror gripped the peoples. The Akali Dal had united with the coterie of Ghadr conspirators, who had escaped punishment or had been released after the 'reforms' to form the Babbar Akali or 'lion' movement. Under the guise of religion these men found plenty to occupy their time. One such instance comes from Jaitu, where the Akalis wished to expropriate another shrine. This time the mahant had warned the police, and when the Akalis rushed the shrine, the police fired. Sixteen were killed. The rest were arrested or captured and had to answer for a long series of charges for dacoity, murder, and other crimes.

But unrest was not at an end by any means. Any form of trouble stirred up against British rule is useful, and there is always a market for the sellers of revolution. The riots continued, although on a smaller scale. They culminated in bloody revolts at Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, and Ludhiana, in which the troops and police did invaluable service in preventing the spread of the 'disease.' The Babbar Akali revolts died in time, but they had caused a well full of blood and a considerable loss of prestige to the Government. Worse still, the British Saviour had gone from the Punjab, the man whom, above all, the Punjabis had taken as their friend. Kind to the peaceful, decisive with the agitators, Sir Michael O'Dwyer had won universal acclamation throughout the Punjab, even from his enemies. But he had gone—and much of the old British spirit went with him.



Another centre of intrigue and unrest at this time, *circa* 1920, was Cawnpore, in the United Provinces. Cawnpore stands on the banks of the Ganges, at an important centre of communication. It is a leading industrial city of India and employs over 20,000 mill-hands. For some time it has enjoyed prosperity, as far as trade goes, but its political history up to the 'twenties had not been outstanding. In 1900, when the bubonic plague broke out, several murders were committed, which temporarily put the town in the limelight of notoriety. In 1913 serious riots had broken out in the Machli Bazar Mosque. In the late nineteen-twenties, however, Cawnpore seemed to be gaining political consciousness.

Then, in 1930, an ordinance was promulgated to prevent the picketing of shops during *hartals*.

This aroused the indignation of the Hindus, but the Moslems saw little in these measures to condemn.

To shopkeepers in England the boycotting of foreign goods would be a measure that greatly decreased their revenue, and consequently would only win vituperation. But in India the business men welcome such measures. They want *hartals* and the boycotting of foreign goods, so that they can sell their own, at increased prices. It is a ramp. They win the mass of the people to their side by religious or other means and then proclaim the *hartal*. The fools they have duped never find out to what ends they have been used. They think they are good patriots in subscribing to such movements. In reality they are betraying their country into the hands of unscrupulous business men.

In Cawnpore the 'patriotism' took on different shades. The Hindus saw the wisdom of the Congress leaders in boycotting British and foreign goods. But their neighbours, the Moslems, were unable to catch on to the idea. They found that a strike meant a great decrease in business. They looked at

it far more sanely than the Hindus, and consequently went unmoved by the fierce fires of nationalism that swept through the city. The Congress Party included both Hindus and Moslems, but so great did the tension between the two sects become that, wherever Moslem speakers in Cawnpore began to address a meeting, they were immediately shouted down by the Hindus in the audience.

Feeling between the two religious factions ran high. Cawnpore contains some dangerous elements—men who for various reasons have thought it best to ‘disappear’ into the city, and whole fraternities of ‘vice-traders.’ These men were not over-particular about the jobs they performed, and an event like a *hartal* was an occasion for celebration. Cawnpore, with the growing unrest between Hindu and Moslem, the sect of ‘bad-hats,’ was fast becoming the ideal background for a riot.

The trouble was brought to a head by the arrest of one, Bhagat Singh, and his subsequent trial. In 1929 he had thrown bombs from the gallery of the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly at Delhi, into the seats below. Fortunately no one was killed. He himself was arrested by the police and sentenced to life transportation. When some time later it was found that there was a vast conspiracy, of which he was an arch-instigator, he was brought back for another trial.

This time he was sentenced to death, although prodigious efforts had been made to delay the sentence by means of holding up the trial with complaints of flaws in the evidence. But however lengthy was the course of justice, it eventually won, and Bhagat Singh was condemned to death.

From the very moment when he was arrested the agitators and the Congress Party had made capital out of the case. Bhagat Singh was labelled ‘hero’—murderer though he was. It was a direct appeal

to youth's heart and to those susceptible adults who could be relied on for revolutionary purposes. Throughout Cawnpore 'leftists' could talk of nothing but the fate of Bhagat Singh. When it became known that Bhagat Singh had been executed, on the night of 23 March, sympathy reached its peak. On the following day the Town Congress Committee proclaimed by way of protest, and a procession of mourning was ordered to commemorate the hero's death.

Little did the faithful mob know that the whole plot had been engineered in the spacious offices of Hindu business men in Cawnpore. These wealthy and honoured men saw in the *hartal* a good way of forbidding the sale of English and foreign goods, with a resultant open market for their own—at their own price. They frequently and grandiosely subscribed to the revolutionary funds.

There was one flaw in the otherwise smooth proceedings. This was the Moslem community as a whole. They had vetoed the *hartal* and would have no part in it. They intended to keep their shops open and the 'Business as Usual' boards outside them.

These tactics infuriated the Hindu mob. When a *hartal* was declared in honour of one of their martyrs it was to be kept.

On the morning of the 24th the *hartal* was proclaimed. At eleven o'clock Moslem women were forced out of their *tongas* in Halsey Road and made to complete their journey on foot. At one o'clock a crowd of Indian students rushed down the Cawnpore Mall smashing shop windows. Soon after Colonel O'Neill was pelted with brickbats as he drove down the Mall. He and his driver were injured, the latter seriously. A British woman was assaulted as she drove in Cawnpore.

So the kettle began to simmer. It finally boiled

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over when the Hindus started to pillage Moslem shops. From that moment riots could no longer be averted.

In Cawnpore the riots that had grown during the morning culminated, the following day, in scenes unparalleled in the history of the United Provinces.

Cawnpore has a population of nearly 250,000 people, of which over two-thirds are Hindus. Under such conditions riots mean mass-murder. To make matters worse, isolated Moslem families lived in the Hindu quarter, and vice versa with Hindu families. In many cases these outnumbered enemies-in-the-midst were dealt with inhumanly and atrociously.

A detailed description of the riot is not necessary, but some of the more obscure and unknown happenings can be described. In all two thousand recorded crimes were committed.

The rioters continued to pillage Moslem shops, plunder their temples and burn them. The Deputy Magistrate was surrounded by a crowd of Moslems who threatened him with sticks and knives, one youth missing his arm with a wild knife slash. The frenzy continued to rise to the heights of madness, while the police did their best, which was an impotent one, as must needs be against such rising as this. Later in the afternoon the Moslems set fire to a Hindu temple and flung bricks at its burning frame.

The temper of the mob continued to become wilder and wilder as the afternoon and evening progressed. More damage was done and more temples were pillaged and set on fire. Both the Moslems and the Hindus were rioting. There was no one guilty and one innocent side. As far as the rebellion went, each sect was as bad as the other.

That night the rioters quietened down and the city was peaceful once again. The next day, however, the flames sprang up brighter than ever, the

struggle became more intense and the scale of slaughter and atrocities showed a corresponding increase.

A terrible occurrence happened on this day. Some Moslems who were living in the Hindu quarter had been assured on the previous day that they should not be harmed. The Hindus, however, despite the sincerity of the Moslems, did not feel safe. So they got hold of an *ekka* for the purpose of conveying their chattels and decided that on the 25th they would go to a safer place. However, the *ekka* disappeared, and it later transpired that the Hindus wished to show their absolute sincerity in their promise to keep the Moslems free of all danger.

Later a crowd of angry and armed Hindus approached the quarter. With considerable uneasiness the Moslems debated their next step. It was decided that they should all shelter in one house. To get to this house they climbed over the roof-tops.

When they reached the chosen Moslem house they were stoned off the roof and the Hindus started to batter down the door. The house was then set alight and the terrified Moslems inside, almost suffocated, either staggered out by themselves or were dragged out by the Hindus.

Amongst those who were dragged out was a woman and her child. The woman, with the natural instinct to protect her child, threw herself on to a pile of dead corpses outside the house. Owing to the fact that the Hindu mob was concerned with the fate of the others, she was able to escape unobserved, and remained on the corpse heap until the mob departed.

While she lay there the rest of the Moslems were dragged out in front of the house, thirteen of them in all, and killed one by one. Their bodies were then flung on top of her and her baby, and sacking was put round the pile and lighted. The woman

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remained there still as the dead below and on top of her, while the flames and smoke swirled around, burning, suffocating, and blinding. Through a gap between two corpses she was able to see dimly the figures of the Hindus. At last the time was safe for her to emerge. Burnt, but still clutching her baby in a desperate embrace, she prised up one of the corpses and staggered out of the flaming hill of death.

Such a story of courage and determination in the face of appalling odds is unusual in India. There is another story from the Cawnpore rebellion that gives the other side, speaks of the friendliness and comradeship of the two sects, Mohammedan and Hindu. Here the Hindus, instead of murdering the Moslems, helped them. Similarly in the Moslem quarter, isolated Hindus still remember with gratitude the benefactions of some Moslem neighbour who sheltered them during those dark days.

On the 25th an armed band of Moslems went round on murder bent. In one street three Hindu corpses and fifteen injured and mutilated Hindus were found.

A postal clerk, on his way to work, was joined by a band of Hindu shopkeepers who wished to see the damage that had been done to their shops. The clerk stopped at a friend's house, and knocked on the door. While he was standing on the doorstep some Moslems came past the house and started to hurl brickbats at him. The clerk and his companions sheltered on the veranda. The clerk was about to draw his revolver to fire on the mob when a Moslem crept up behind him and hit him a death blow over the head. Two other Hindus were similarly dealt with and the rest escaped with injuries, varying from knock-out blows with sticks to severe mutilation with knives.

On this and succeeding days the city was full of

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crazy fanatics who murdered and burnt, pillaged and tortured, until the city stank with blood. The dead and wounded lay in heaps. The plundered goods of the shopkeepers were scattered on the ground. Charred remains of cars littered the streets. Little children wandered, lost among the debris and ruins of what once had been their homes.

In all, eighteen mosques, forty-two temples, two hundred and forty-eight Hindu houses, one hundred and one Moslem houses, were damaged either by fire or looting. The deaths of ninety-nine Moslems and forty-nine Hindus were recorded. The number of Indians who died outside the hospital cannot be ascertained definitely.

The danger that threatens India is not so much the inefficiency of the servants of the Government, as the way in which they are red-taped and generally tied up, so that to take any action at all means a rapid consultation of about a dozen Government blue books besides the addition of numerous grey hairs.

By the 13th of the month the Cawnpore revolt had died down. Owing to its very grave nature and the supposed inability of the police, a Commission of Inquiry was set up to look into the riots. They recommended very strongly that Cawnpore should have a larger police force, that it should be brought up to date and that considerable numbers of police should be drafted there as the present number was insufficient.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DRAMA ON THE FRONTIER

**T**O understand the North-West Frontier and its troubles one must know a little of its history of eternal unrest, and of centuries of rapine and bloodshed.

Alexander the Greek (called in the Middle East, Zulquarnain, the Two-Horned) entered India through Kabul and found, to his cost, that the turbulent tribesmen were some of the best fighters in the world. Through the Khyber Pass, gateway to fertile India, have come Alexander's Macedonians, Bactrian Greeks, Indo-Scythians, White Huns, and Moghuls. Then, early in this century, that tract of country lying north of Baluchistan, between the Indus and Afghanistan, became the most northerly province of India. Which means to say that, although under political control, Britain is responsible for maintaining order amongst Chitrali, Bajauri, Yussafzai, Mahsud, Waziri, and Afridi tribesmen, an Herculean task.

Peshawar City is the nerve-centre of the north-west, 'the spiritual home of all Pathans,' and in recent years the authorities have had to cope with definite propagandist movements, which originated beyond the Border, but which had immediate reactions. Their efforts at stirring up trouble were extraordinarily successful, and, aided by the unwillingness of the authorities to use legitimate force, the whole Border was ablaze for weeks on end, and



resulted in the Peshawar incident when British troops were stoned by the mob and British officers were openly insulted in the streets of Peshawar. Abdul Ghaffar and the Hajji of Turanzai were eventually arrested and deported to an 'unknown destination,' but it was inevitable that their mantle should soon fall on other shoulders. The Mad Fakir, who was the cause of an increase of Frontier detachments, was only a symbol of a never-ending unrest. He was the match for the tinder.

The Frontier country is made up of incredibly barren hills interspersed with smiling valleys, of roads which must be picketed on every height so that motor-cars or mule-trains shall not be sniped at every turn, and of men and women who have been suckled on the results of raid and foray. *In Peshawar City in 1931 the average murder rate was eight per week!* That gives an insight as to the Pathan's value of human life! Remember that, like the Bedouin of Central Arabia, the Border tribesman is a drinker of the milk of war. In Waziristan a continual state of internal feud exists, and at all costs 'honour,' taking it in the medieval chivalric sense, must be satisfied. A woman is seduced; her seducer is killed. From that arises a blood feud in which two whole families may be wiped out, stalking each other and shooting to kill at sight, while other families are often involved. A man who accepted hard cash in return for the loss of his wife's honour would never dare show his face amongst men again! Another very common cause of strife is the question of tribal boundaries, for land and water are in many parts of the Border so valuable that a Mahsud will think nothing of killing to defend his rights.

Here, then, is a picture of a conglomeration of tribesmen, fierce, bloodthirsty, keen to avenge the slightest insult, quite intolerant of authority, and

hating the 'Unbeliever' who bars his way to those fertile plains where fat Hindu *bunniahs* (money-lenders) can be looted for the price of a wrung neck. Thirteen centuries ago Khalifa Umr said: 'The mind of Islam is the Ka'aba, the holy shrine of Allah.' He spoke, of course, of Mecca, but the words are as true to-day as then, and remember that Islam to-day includes roughly one-seventh of the whole human race!

Add to this the fact that these tribesmen of the Border have amongst themselves a tacit understanding. There may be a murder or two, an odd foray, but during harvesting all real hostilities cease as they do in winter when the passes are snow-blocked. But when harvests have been gathered the mind naturally turns to war. It is a case of 'idle hands,' and the result is an attack on the inoffensive Halimzai. The inevitable cry is against the *shaitan* British Government and, often with tongue in cheek, the tribesmen respond. All they are thinking of is war and the chances of loot. At any moment that movement may be turned into a real *jihad*, or Holy War, against the Unbeliever.

It has often been asserted by the British that the Bolsheviks have their fingers in the trans-Border pie, and there may be some reason for the fear. Yet there is no direct evidence of any sort that interference has taken place. On the other hand, Lenin, who did not mince words, made two pronouncements. One was: '*The road to London lies through Kabul!*' the other: '*In India we must strike them hardest!*' There, at any rate, was direct evidence of hostility, but it is extraordinarily difficult to assess the amount and value of propaganda in those wild hills and valleys. The Pathan is nothing if not a realist. Promises to him are as the wind. What he wants is ten-rupee notes tucked away in a hole in his mud and stone-walled house; an

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increase in his flocks and herds ; the ability to buy a new and charming wife. He deals in realities, not in phrases, and for that reason he eyes the machines of the R.A.F. with a good deal more earnestness than he listens to empty promises.

It has been proved that the aeroplane is a weapon which the Pathan fears. It moves swiftly and strikes inexorably. The League of Nations once argued as to whether 'punitive bombing' as a purely precautionary or police measure should be allowed, but Britain was adamant on this point. She had good reason, having lost thousands of lives and wasted hundreds of thousands in the past on 'punitive measures,' which are in reality minor Frontier wars. And this notably on the North-West Frontier and in Aden. The Pathan would shout for joy if Britain were compelled to abandon punitive air raids. The 'small wars' in the air of recent years have been directed mostly against the Mahsud and Mohmand tribes, and though not many casualties were inflicted the moral effect was enormous. In this connection there is an amusing story of a trans-Border air raid. It occurred in 1927, when a fanatical *mullah* was trying to raise the Mohmands. The Mohmands were very dubious about the advisability of attacking either the British or tribes friendly to them, but the *mullah* would not be beaten. Summoning a *jirga*, he addressed the headmen.

"I tell you," he cried, waving his arms, "I have cast spells : I have cursed the Unbeliever ! Be not afraid of the bird-men, for their bombs shall turn to rain and their aeroplanes shall fall to the earth !"

Actually the very next machine that went over got engine-trouble and had to make a forced landing. A second machine, sent out with spare parts, also overshot the landing-ground and crashed. The *mullah* was in ecstasies.

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“What did I tell you?” he exclaimed. “The spell works! Two already have crashed to the earth and more shall follow.”

He was a bad prophet, for the ensuing bombs did not ‘turn to rain,’ and the result was that the Mohmands thought better of starting another tribal war.

Politicians in England talk in Parliament, knowing little or nothing of conditions at first hand. Sir Percy X. makes a portentous ‘statement,’ usually from hearsay evidence, while the man on the spot laughs or curses according to the conditions of the moment. Meanwhile, away and beyond the hills, men nurtured in the art of war plan a raid, and scheming minds plan to use these men for their own ends. The upshot of the matter is ‘in the hands of Allah.’ In one moment the Border may be ablaze or the whole show may fizzle out, while the local Political Officer demands a fine of a thousand rifles.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE STORY OF THE 'RED' FAKIR

THE North-West Frontier has known many tribal revolts, but none that has so captured the imagination as that with which the name of the 'Red' Fakir of Ipi is so indelibly coupled. It is an old story made interesting by the personality of its instigator—the Fakir. But it is a story which shows clearly the trouble that such a fanatic can create.

It is not possible to tell where the plot actually started—the proof is there, that it is merely a case confined to the North-West Frontier—but the circumstances are suspicious. Certainly the Fakir had been waiting for a long time for a chance to stir up trouble. Did he receive any instructions from centres nearer the heart of India? It is a pertinent question and one which may never be answered. Yet it is one that suggests the damage that any malcontent can do, by organizing the Frontier tribes to rebel against the Government and cause large forces to be moved from, perhaps, danger centres, to the hills.

The one quality which a would-be trouble-stirrer, such as the Fakir, must have, is genius to stir the Frontier tribes into an Islamic fanaticism. This quality he must possess or his plans will fail as certainly as if he had intended to organize a knitting circle, for the tribes can only be roused by one call, 'Islam in Danger.' That is the only unifying force on the North-West Frontier.

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It must be remembered that British administration in India is not effective right up to the Indo-Afghanistan Frontier, that is, up to the Durand Line. British administration ceases at the British Administrative Border. Beyond that is a kind of no-man's-land, inhabited by the fierce Frontier tribes in which there is little judicial or Governmental system. This 'no-man's-land' extends from Kashmir in the north to the Gomal Pass in the south, and the only British posts within it are the five political agencies of Malakand, Khyber, Kurram, and North and South Waziristan, primarily used for treating with the tribes to prevent revolts.

That is all British rule encompasses. Justice is settled in the age-old ways, blood feuds are still rife, and the people are ignorant and superstitious. They recognize no boundaries—Afghanistan is equally as acceptable as India—and consequently are very difficult to deal with in times of unrest.

To add to these difficulties the country is extremely hilly, communications are still backward (although the Government is progressing with its road-building policy), and the livelihood is hard. This last point is particularly important, because a scant and uneconomic living can fashion men into tough and warlike material, willing to raid other tribes or towns for the sake of food, loot, and money. Again, the British Government is helping the tribes to live a more favourable existence by improving their economic lot with agricultural and irrigation schemes and so far the policy has been rewarded by the acclamation of the tribesmen. Possibly, in the near future, will be seen the spectacle of tribal weapons being turned into ploughshares.

Besides these advantages, the British Government offers to all friendly tribes commerce with and free entry into the lower lying districts, and free and

voluntary educational and medical facilities and enlistment in the Forces.

Thus it will be seen that the Government has not been slow to pursue a moderate policy in connection with the North-West Frontier. Violent decisive action, such as occupying the territory right up to the Durand Line, could only have been met with armed resistance and unnecessary loss of life and money, while closing the hilly tracts altogether and retiring behind the necessarily more reinforced British Administrative Border would have been as unsympathetic to the tribesmen's lot as it would have been foolish to the eventual maintenance of law and order. Causes of revolts on the Frontier cannot be laid at Governmental doors.

The most usual cause of war is the tribesmen's greed for gain. Islam is, of course, the disguise under which this policy works. The mad *mullah* receives his summons from Allah that he is to make a Holy War, unite Islam—and the trouble starts. The *maliks*, or tribal elders, are paid by the Government to restrain the more fanatical among the tribesmen, but in most cases the young hot-heads are entirely without discipline, mock the *maliks*, accept the *mullah's* words—and the underlying prospect of loot—with cheers and the revolt is well in hand.

Nowadays, with the increasing mobility which roads give to troops, with cantonments dotted about tribal territory at convenient intervals, there is increasing difficulty in stirring the tribesmen, more particularly the older ones, from their lethargy. But as the recent unrest in Waziristan has shown, it can be accomplished with a leader sufficiently fervent and with the younger men chafing at the long intervals between their fighting and looting activities.

Obviously, it is upon the *maliks* that the responsibility rests. If they are impotent in the face of the rising Islamic tide, then the situation is dangerous.

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If they can restrain those placed in their responsibility, well and good. But what could restrain tribesmen who had listened to the eloquent voice of the Fakir of Ipi ?

In 1935 the Tori Khel tribe of Northern Waziristan agreed to harbour no more dangerous persons, fanatics, mad *mullahs* or other cranks who tended to disrupt the *Pax Britannica*, and would, on consideration of a small advance in tribal allowances, give free access to Government troops in the Lower Khaisora Valley. Agreement or no agreement, by the next year a home-produced fanatic had blossomed and ripened into the Perfection of Seditionism. This was none other than the Red Fakir, from Ipi, a village lying to the west of Bannu in Tori Khel country.

The cause of the trouble was the alleged kidnapping of a Hindu girl. Burning with the righteousness of Mohammedanism, the Fakir began to make capital out of her plight. This unfortunate child was alleged to have been converted to Islam by the Mohammedans. Her parents, however, were not of the same opinion, and insisted that she had been kidnapped and forcibly converted against her own will. They demanded her instant release and brought a civil suit for her restoration to their guardianship.

This was not good enough for the Mohammedans. Besides which it gave them a chance of airing Islam, provoking the Hindus and the British, and generally making things as hot as they could.

The Fakir of Ipi immediately protested against such an unfair case. The child belonged to Islam now. She was old enough to know her own mind. The age-old enmity of Moslem India against Hindu India was in him, and his appeal stirred the hillmen. In their hearts they saw his wisdom, and in their eyes the loot that would be theirs !



An attempt was made in Bannu, where the trouble over the Hindu girl had started, to 'influence' the officers by a group of Moslems. Subsequently the Dowers, a Lower Tochi Valley tribe, organized a *lashkar*, or tribal force, to 'help' the British in their decision on the girl's case. The Fakir, of course, had his hand in this pie, and also wished for other *lashkars* to be raised, and tried to enlist the sympathy of the Tori Khel Wazirs and the Shabi Khel Mahsuds.

But he received no support from these quarters, and when a column of soldiers was marched up the Lower Tochi Valley, the Dower *lashkar* thought fit to disperse. But the trouble still continued and the Resident and Political Agent in Waziristan held *jirgas* (councils) with the *maliks* to see if they could influence their young hot-heads. But in April 1936 the Dower *lashkar* again sprang up, and firmer action was taken by the authorities. The Tochi Scouts were ordered to destroy three of the ring-leaders' houses, including that of the Fakir. This, no doubt, further increased that gentleman's invective against the North Waziristan Agency, the local Resident, the North-West Frontier Administration, the Indian Government, the British Government, and the Hindus. He must have been extremely annoyed when he reached home, for he had already been unsuccessful in raising the Mahsuds, and, with his house destroyed into the bargain, he was indeed a prophet whom his country recognized not.

In September 1936 an appellate order, in the case of the young Hindu girl, was passed by the highest judicial authority in the North-West Frontier—the Judicial Commissioner—giving her back to her parents.

This action inflamed the Fakir to prodigious efforts and he redoubled his activities among the Tori Khel Wazirs and the Mahsuds. The British tried to make

the tribal *maliks* expel him, but they confessed themselves unable to deal with the situation. Their younger men were becoming angry and warlike as a result of the Fakir's intensive activities, and they urged the Government to make a demonstration, which was in accordance with the rights of the treaty of 1935.

On 25 November 1936 the Government forces left Mirali on a march through hostile territory. There were to be no punitive measures, but the Government forces were strongly opposed before they had gone far, and two majors and one private were killed.

The Fakir fled from his home and went into hiding. Nothing further happened for some time. The Government were still trying to reach a settlement with the *maliks*, but it seemed ineffective from the start, with the Fakir continually making trouble. One ray of hope came from the action of the Shaktu Mahsud *jirga*, who deposited a number of rifles as security.

On 7 December a British striking force of three thousand set out from Mirali for the Tochi Valley. As the force advanced a road was built to help the communications.

The Fakir had not yet fully roused the tribesmen, for during the 'Id Festival, in December, the most prominent *mullahs* and fanatics advised the tribesmen not to support the Fakir, with the consequence that only the Shogi Khel and Zarinai Tori Khel Wazirs were left supporting him. These tribes continued to harry the English lines and, later, Major J. W. Wilson was killed. By the end of December seditious tribesmen were still making trouble, although the road-building was progressing, and the Jalu Camp was the centre of sniping. The tribal casualties were estimated at twenty-six killed and thirty seriously injured.

But the Government had failed to lay hands on the elusive Fakir, and his propaganda continued to pour forth. The Tori Khel were unable to expel him from his cave headquarters at Aarsal Kot, in the Shaktu Valley. His influence brought plundering *lashkars* into action. In February Captain J. A. Keogh and Lieutenant R. N. Beatty (Officiating Assistant Political Agent, North Waziristan) were ambushed and murdered by a gang of Madda Khel tribesmen. They were making their way up the Tochi Valley to pay tribal levies. Then followed a series of incidents by marauding gangs. Raids were made upon administered districts, men and women were killed and kidnapped, and property was damaged. The tribesmen carried off cattle and sheep and looted the bazaars.

Frequent attacks were made on the British pacifying forces and the whole of Waziristan fomented with unrest.

In March the 6th Light Tank Company was moved up from Delhi. The situation had deteriorated considerably since the early months of the year. The Fakir, now aided by other *mullahs*, was striving to make a Holy War and unite Islam. The prospect of bettering their conditions appealed to the tribesmen.

The Fakir developed an illness in the early months of 1937 which necessitated his being carried about on a stretcher. He had established his headquarters at Aarsal Kot, but for purposes of greater effectiveness was being carried round the tribal country. Although he was attempting to stir the Afghanistan tribes as well, they did not respond to his fervent message. At this time the tribes had diverted their attention to cutting telephone wires, although great efforts were being made to subdue them by the *maliks* (tribal elders).

Later in March the troops at Miram Shah and Damdil were sniped in camp, and an attack was

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made on the picket at Miram Shah on the night of 18 March. Damdil suffered a dawn attack by thirty tribesmen, who were repulsed. The Indian troops lost three men and seven wounded.

On the 19th a *lashkar* entered the village of Lakki and carried off five Hindus. Another raid was made upon a Hindu house at Bakmal, but the raiders were driven off, leaving one tribesman dead.

On 27 March *The Times* correspondent wrote :

' There is a distinct probability that the situation in North Waziristan will not deteriorate further, notwithstanding several disconcerting factors. Forces friendly to the Government are helping to subdue the lawless elements with assurances of Government assistance if required.'

It began to look as if the war clouds were breaking. An Utmanzai Wazir tribal council was called at Miram Shah to help prevent revolt. It was imperative that this tribe should be stopped, for it occupied nearly the whole of the North Waziristan Agency and part of it was composed of the Tori Khels, who were the real danger. The Resident therefore thought fit to speak with the Utmanzais and restrain them and their inflammable sub-section. The tribesmen, to a man, declared that they found no fault in the Government's attitude to their religion. They also declared that they would stand by the Government in the event of serious revolt.

So, for this first stage of the trouble, opinion among the Waziristan tribes was divided. The *maliks* had a restraining influence upon the people over which they ruled that seemed to be braving the violent assaults the Fakir was making on it. No one knew which way the wind would really blow.

About a week later the Fakir, realizing that his position was not quite as commanding as he would

wish it, and not wishing to make a bungle out of the revolt, drafted a letter to the authorities setting out his demands.

The *maliks*, who went to the Fakir's lair to learn his precise terms, said he told them that he was not going to make a settlement with the Government, but one acceptable to everybody.

Then, on 1 April, a large force of tribesmen collected in the Lower Khaisora Valley. The *maliks* did all they could to restrain the Fakir, but that gentleman, after his ostensible message of peace for all, had fomented more trouble and raised a *lashkar*.

A thousand tribesmen attacked a British position and, using guerrilla tactics, hindered the Government forces. The tribesmen suffered many casualties and were reported in *The Times* to have :

‘ Fought with great tenacity and sometimes with fanatical fury, exposing themselves freely and making frequent attacks on the troops.’

In April 1936 a convoy was attacked by tribesmen and seven British officers and two British N.C.O.s were killed, as well as numerous other casualties. Hostile bodies of tribesmen continued to collect and R.A.F. machines were brought into action.

The situation was now considered so serious that the 1st Indian Division, under Major-General E. de Burgh, was detailed for service in Waziristan. The Fakir still continued his propaganda in the face of a rather curious incident.

A number of his relatives accompanied by elderly women were instructed to visit him and entreat him to desist from his trouble-stirring. This they did, in the name of Islam, by the word of the Prophet, and carrying the Koran.

But the Fakir was adamant in the face of such simple pleading. Some attempt was made

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later to keep provisions from him, but the Fakir proved himself resourceful enough to provision himself—like John the Baptist.

On 15 April a raid for loot was attempted on Bannu. This, however, failed. On the following Sunday a large force of Wazirs and Mahsuds came to the cave of the Fakir in the Shaktu Valley for prayers—and encouragement.

Subsequently dacoity took place, the first example being at Bahar Village. Hindu shops were attacked by about sixty Wazirs, and eight hundred sheep were carried off.

Major-General de Burgh was now moving south from Mirali for Tori Khel country with the object of getting to the centre of disaffection and effectively destroying it at its roots. News came through that the Fakir had started a hospital for the wounded near Aarsal Kot. The tribesmen had suffered numerous casualties, and there was a definite need for such measures.

Then, at the end of April, a tribal attack was made on the Biche Kashkai Camp, in which one officer was wounded, and twenty-four Indians killed.

What actually happened was that the tribesmen, to the number of about four hundred, attacked a picket. They used Great-War-type Mills bombs and hurled them at a picket, which suffered nine casualties, two of the bombs exploding, one being thrown back at the tribesmen, and one failing to explode.

The tribesmen then tricked the other pickets, and penetrated to within fifty yards of the camp proper, from which strategic point of vantage they were repulsed.

There followed another series of outrages. Roads, bridges, culverts, etc., constructed to better the tribesmen's lot, were destroyed by wandering bands of malcontents. At Mirali a tribesman attempted to

kill a British officer, but unfortunately for the tribesman was himself killed.

By now the British penetration had assumed formidable proportions, and the tribesmen were beginning to get uneasy about it. The Fakir found his support dwindling and, although he continued to appeal for reinforcements, was unable to get sufficient support for his 'Holy War.'

Then came the brilliant Sham Plain action, which was the main cause for breaking the trouble finally. It was an example of British courage and fortitude when facing fearful odds. Little has reached this country about the heroic action of British and Indian troops in this engagement, which can only be paralleled in its heroism and bravery by the epic of Wolfe at Quebec.

The object of the Sham Plain action was to deprive the Wazirs of one of their principal grazing grounds. High up in the mountains, and considered inaccessible from any except one route, stands the Sham Plain. The tribesmen themselves refused to believe that a military force could reach their mountain stronghold, except by the path which they, of course, commanded.

The tribesmen knew of other difficult paths, but considered that these were absolutely impassable for an armed enemy force.

One night in May the British troops started their operations. The heights were so precipitous, the track so narrow, that during the ascent sixteen mules fell to the valley below. Only one was killed and all the equipment salvaged. Eventually the plain was reached. The enemy were taken completely by surprise, for the Government forces had come up in their rear. The British proceeded to force the tribesmen towards the other side of the plateau.

At the finish of the action it was found that fifty tribesmen had been killed and forty wounded. As

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the action took place at the time of the Coronation the camp on Sham Plain was fittingly called Coronation Camp.

The Wazirs realized the seriousness of their plight now that they were deprived of their most coveted grazing ground.

They had suffered heavy losses, would probably have to go short of food, and were continually harassed by aeroplanes. Small wonder they did not feel so happy about their Holy War.

By the end of May the British had captured the cave previously occupied by the Fakir. Needless to say the Fakir had fled.

Then followed a period of consultations between British and tribesmen, and an attempt was made to secure a lasting truce. A meeting was held at Miram Shah, between a *jirga* (council of elders) and the Indian authorities. The *jirga* was positive in its opinion that the tribesmen wanted peace. Assurances were demanded by the British for the tribesmen's future conduct, and eventually it was agreed to leave the matter as they had decided, until the next *jirga*.

The Government announced that if the Fakir of Ipi was allowed back in Tori Khel country, it would be forced to take punitive measures against the tribesmen with devastating effect.

The tribesmen were allowed to resume their normal occupations and return to their villages. Tori Khel Wazirs were no longer arrested, but the gangs of malcontents continued to operate.

It was reported in *The Times* (9 June 1937) that 'No peace terms have yet been laid down to the Tori Khels, the position at present being in the nature of an armistice pending proof that the *maliks* (tribal elders) can control their hot-heads.'

So the 'mopping up' continued and the gangs were rounded up when and wherever it was possible.



Arms were taken away and kidnapped Hindus released.

So the Fakir went uncaptured, a price upon his head. It would be correct to say that the tribes do not want any more war. Pacification is progressing, one hundred and six miles of new roads are being driven into the heart of the disaffected areas both for military and economic purposes.

At the cessation of major hostilities it was possible to sum up briefly the causes and effects of this campaign.

It would be useful to deal summarily with them in this book.

Official reasons for the revolt are given as :

The anti-Hindu propaganda of the Fakir who had based his appeal to the ignorant and credulous tribesmen on the allegation that Islam was in danger. The more youthful and turbulent elements to whom the unrest, for the most part, had been confined were rendered receptive to such propaganda by the religious excitability and impatience. The Malikhs had, in the majority of cases, endeavoured to exercise control, but they had been powerless against the religious appeal. The less responsible and more excitable elements, who had little to lose and had found the recent prolonged period of peace in Waziristan irksome, welcomed the chance of trying conclusions with the Government forces and had also been influenced by the hope of securing rifles and other loot.

There had been dissatisfaction, especially among the Tori Khel, with the existing internal distribution of the allowances which were paid to a tribe by Government and were designed to give them a stake in the maintenance of peace and order. There also appeared to be some feeling among the tribesmen that the constitutional changes in India indicated weakness on the part of the Government.

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The casualties sustained by British and Indian troops from November to June were as follows :

Thirteen British officers killed and 15 wounded, 17 other ranks killed and 55 wounded ; 4 Indian officers killed and 11 wounded, 129 Indian other ranks killed and 359 wounded, making a total of 163 killed and 440 wounded.

The total number of troops engaged was approximately 32,000 regular troops and 5,000 irregulars. The number of casualties among the tribesmen was estimated at 720 killed and 660 injured.

So ended another useless, costly, and infamous North-West Frontier revolt.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SANCTIMONIOUS BRAHMAN

**I**N the dim dawn of Indian history, many thousands of years ago, the Brahmans formed the only sect in India which applied itself to learning. It was only the Brahmans who could understand the ancient laws of Hinduism and the sacred creeds.

With a cunning acquired by knowing more than the rest, and having the power of a vivid imagination coupled with unscrupulous brains, they began to weave a pattern of life for Hindus, set themselves up as earthly messiahs and ordered that all men should live according to their rules.

The example has recently been followed by Hitler in his totalitarian state. Wishing to subordinate everything to the State, he must needs change the creeds of the Church to align religion with the philosophy of the State. It has provoked much argument and not a little bloodshed, but in the days when the Brahmans did the same thing in India, the act escaped unnoticed.

Why? Because the people were so backward and ignorant that they had already accepted the Brahmans as rulers of the destiny when the laws were changed. So the Brahmans continued secretly to pervert the Hindu religion—until they had made it the pawn of their own needs.

They decreed that the caste barriers should remain, so that none should challenge their power and wealth. They forbade other men to learn or to read books,

and punished them if they did. They set up the complicated rules regarding 'untouchables,' the laws that govern child marriage, and the thousand and one 'religious' thank-offerings that encumber the lives of the people, robbing them of the better existence that might be theirs.

To-day the Brahman is still all-powerful in India. He still rules the minds of the Hindu masses. British rule has done much to combat his deadly authority, but it must be remembered that he has held the Hindus in bondage for thousands of years, so that obeisance to him is inbred in three-quarters of the Indian population. To-day the Indians misguidedly think the Brahman is on the side of justice and Indian nationalism. That he is on the side of nationalism there is little doubt, but justice, no. An India with a Nationalist Government would mean a return to the rule of the Brahmans, an even more powerful oligarchic conspiracy against the simple folk of the country.

The Brahman's part in history has been that of the arch-villain. By setting caste so rigidly, he insured that there would be two classes, master and man. The *sudras* and 'untouchables' work for him and give him money, while the Brahman sneers and preaches of his own greatness.

The Brahman makes money out of every trivial event in the Hindu's life.

When a baby is born, when he is freed from 'birth pollution,' when he is christened, when his hair is clipped, when he is fed on solids, when he begins to walk—on all these occasions must the Brahman be paid. No matter how lowly the status of the Hindu, no matter how 'outcaste' he is, he must still pay the Brahman. On an average the Hindu pays five times as much to his 'ministering angel' as he does to the British Government.

But no matter how godly the untouchable may be

or how much money he pays the Brahman, he cannot advance his social status. He is condemned to a life of indignity and injustice, a life in which his very name is spat upon. He is treated as less than the dirt. He is made to perform the most degrading tasks, and always with that spirit of willingness that shows that he was preordained to his position.

He may be a scavenger, a water-carrier, or a remover of night-soil—whatever he is, he is a loathsome, ignorant creature, for ever condemned to walk the paths that are predetermined for him. His children are not allowed at the schools to which the children of other castes go. He may not walk near Brahmans. If his shadow falls across their food it is 'polluted' and he is damned. He is not allowed to possess the Hindu vedas. He may not draw water from the wells. Briefly he is condemned to a life of unspeakable misery.

Is it a matter for wonder that many of these outcast people turn to crime—to become the dacoits, pick-pockets, murderers, and prostitutes of India?

This is one awful legacy of Brahmanic rule. The parasites have bred more parasites who live in a different way, but who are just as harmful.

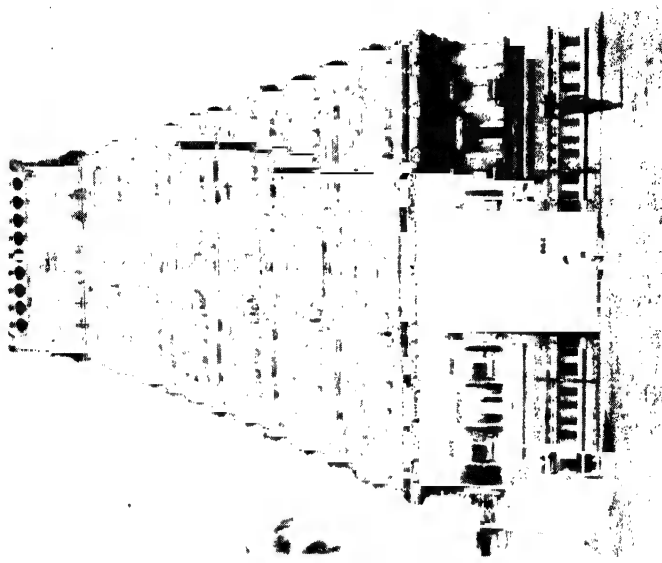
So we get such happenings as these in India, indicating the curse of Hindu caste system in Hindustan.

Take first the case of an English woman in India, as a victim of Hindu outcasts. In her bed, in the drab, badly built Indian bungalow, the white woman lay wide awake praying for sleep. . . . It was a dead still night, the heat was stifling. Two hundred yards from the bungalow rose the black wall of the jungle, seeming to draw ever closer like a crouching beast.

The white woman had a touch of fever. The buzz of the mosquitoes became magnified, turned into dreadful sounds. Sleep was impossible. She prayed for the return of her husband from his late conference at a nearby bungalow. Suddenly she heard a noise,



A WOMAN IN THE ACT OF WORSHIPPING  
A FAKIR AT THE PACHMARHI MELA



TEMPLE OF MYLAPORE



and her hands clenched. Glancing over the sheet, she saw a form cross before a square of dim light that was the window. White women in India learn to conquer fear. She leapt from her bed and grappled with the silent form.

But instead of her hands touching clothes, they felt a smooth, shiny surface, and slipped. She clutched again, found nothing, heard the door shut, and was alone.

Then she realized that she had been grappling with a stark-naked Indian thief, greased from head to foot, without a stitch of clothing, even with his head shaved.

Climbing a greasy pole is child's play compared to catching a greased Indian in the darkness, let alone holding on to him.

Such are the methods adopted by the Indian house burglar, counterpart of Bill Sykes.

Another inhuman method of the Indian thief is to pass a snake through a bedroom window and wait, maybe three minutes, maybe three hours, before the snake strikes down the sleeper, squirting its poison through the skin. Then robbery is easy—and who is to say that the snake did not find its own way through the window?

Snakes recall another story of the Indian thief, simple but believable in a land of so many queer characteristics.

Three merchants were sitting together in a house when one of them looked up at the roof and saw a gigantic snake hanging down from the beams, extending itself with a monotonous motion, until it appeared to be about to strike his friend.

With a hurried warning the man sped out of the room closely followed by his friends. Outside, who should they meet but a band of travelling snake-charmers.

"Quick," gasped one of the threatened Indians,



"there's a snake in there. He's nearly killed us. Go and charm him."

The snake-charmers waited, politely.

"What are you waiting for?"

"Without money, the snake remains in the house," one of them said.

The money was forthwith produced, a snake-charmer entered the house and charmed the snake, and the merchants were satisfied.

And the snake? The snake-charmers put it through the window before the men arrived and then at an opportune moment they had appeared outside the house.

This is a simple trick, but one that finds many victims.

Caste, by breeding a hereditary class of priests, has also bred an hereditary class of criminals—by economic necessity. For the Indian criminal is a type, not just a man who turns to the profession because it is easier than others. He had crime ingrained in him, his ancestors before him were criminals, and, as a matter of caste, so is he.

So we find him wandering the country, finding fools to dupe. In the first chapter I mentioned two special types of criminals, the Thug and the Dacoit. There are plenty of other types less daring and less perverted than these. Some of them are likeable fellows, humorous, and pleasure-loving. They see no fault in crime as such—it is their occupation. A bank clerk might curse against his lot in just the same way as these unfortunates. But like the bank clerk they seldom give it up.

The criminal tribes and classes have some queer customs and superstitions. It has been mentioned already that a man of the criminal classes has to 'prove' himself before his prospective wife will look at him. A good many young women have lost husbands through this insistence!

## THE SANCTIMONIOUS BRAHMAN

Amongst the tricks of the Indian thieves is the favourite 'changing metal' swindle—calculated to send the Indian villager running for his valuables so that they may be changed into gold.

To start the trick, the thief needs gold as well as the brass which he will change. "Is there any gold in the village?" he asks. The villagers proceed to pile the gold they have saved in front of him. When everything is ready he puts the gold together with the brass, in a sacred vessel. He then explains that he is going to pray to the gods, who will change the brass into gold, if everyone is earnest and believes in his power.

The villagers squat round the thief as he mutters weird incantations to appease the god and ask for his aid in changing the brass into gold. Minutes go by and still the thief prays while all sit silent and awe-struck round him.

After hours have elapsed the thief appears satisfied. He opens the sacred vessel to find—not the brass changed to gold—but the gold changed to brass!

The villagers crowd round him angrily. "Where is the gold?" they ask.

The thief can answer even that searching question. The god, he explains, is wrathful. Instead of turning the brass into gold, the god has shown his displeasure in turning the gold into brass. He goes on to explain that there must be an unbeliever in the village who doubted the god's magic powers. It is not for the villagers to blame him but the unbeliever who doubted the god. Some unfortunate is made the scapegoat for the failure of the experiment, and the thief departs while the angry multitude swarms around the hapless innocent.

Another type of crime prevalent in India to-day is 'baggage-stealing.'

A thief will get into a train with a number of

other passengers. He will make sure that the train is travelling a good distance, and that his fellow-passengers are as well. He makes friends with them during the journey, telling them of his business in Bombay and how wealthy he is. The Indians are intrigued by his statements which are well exemplified by his generosity. Having gained their confidence the thief's job is done, until night falls and it is time to sleep.

As the carriage is crowded, there will not be enough room for them all to sleep on the seats. Someone will have to sleep on the floor.

One of the passengers good-willingly volunteers to be the unlucky one. Then it is time for the thief to show his generosity once again. *He* offers to sleep on the floor. No matter how much the others argue he is adamant. He is going to sleep on the floor, and no one is going to stop him. His 'brothers' shall sleep well and in comfort.

So his 'brothers' settle down for the night on the seats and the thief lies on the floor.

Regular breathing soon tells him that everyone in the carriage is asleep. Each man's bundle reposes under his seat bulky and dim in the shadow. Hastily he ransacks them all, taking what is valuable and leaving that which is worthless. He produces a bundle of his own and stuffs the stolen articles and money into it. While his 'brothers' sleep he alights at a wayside station and is away before the rest of the travellers wake up to find that all their valuables have gone.

That sort of crime is particularly prevalent in India. It is partly the result of the railways usurping the place of the hereditary donkey-man. The donkey-man soon found that when the railways were built he had little to eat. So he took to crime and got his own back from railway travellers.

A friend of mine once told me how he had had

all his money and a number of valuables stolen while he was sleeping on an Indian train. The thief even took the watch that was reposing beneath his pillow. How he got into the compartment remains a mystery. He must have climbed along the outside of the carriage or along the roof—but it shows that if crooks can steal from Europeans without compunction, they can do so on a far grander scale from Indians, although perhaps not so profitably.

Another story I heard about criminal India concerns railways—and religion.

A Madrassi visited an Indian station-master and told him that he was his son in another life. This, he said, had been revealed to him by a priest only a day ago and he had hurried here to tell his 'father' the good news.

His 'father' believed the story entirely and made a fitting prayer to the gods. He allowed the Madrassi to stay with him for a week, but one day, on returning home, found that his 'son' had vanished. With him, of course, had gone the station-master's valuables.

Caste makes criminals out of those who neither belong to the criminal tribes, nor, otherwise than when they were temporarily unbalanced, would ever dream of committing a crime.

The mother of a young man of high caste had been keeping company with a lower-caste woman. Each time the boy got to know of these meetings he grew more angry. Like most Indians he took his caste very seriously. One night, when his mother came in later than usual, he was waiting with a knife in his hand. Fanatically, he struck at her. His passion increased as he hurled himself into his righteous task.

When he had finished, his mother was a mangled, bloody heap upon the floor. Seizing the body, he threw it outside the door.

Later the police arrested him for murder and he was hanged.

One must not suppose that such occurrences are unusual. In a country which has been through such a confusion of rules and reigns, and in which the Brahman has been the enemy of every man that was not his friend, it is natural.

When you read to-morrow, or the next day, that Indians are dissatisfied with British rule, read Brahmans instead of British. That will explain a lot of things ; because the Hindu caste system has divided the population there into two sections : the Brahman and the outcast ; the outcast is regarded as infra-human. Thank God such a system does not appear amongst the sons of Islam in India ; they, at least, treat each other as human beings.

## CHAPTER XI

### MYSTIC RITES OF HINDUISM

**I**F we look back into the dawn of civilization when, during the day, man, untamed, roamed the earth in search of food, and at night the members of the tribe sought collective shelter in their village of rough huts against the dangers of wild animals, we find a religion springing up in the community, a religion whose basis was fear.

In those days men and women worshipped the things they did not understand ; they worshipped the sun because it ripened their crops—without it they had no food—and because it gave them light ; they worshipped the moon because of its mystery.

The Hindus worshipped the cow because it gave them many necessities. Gradually it became something sacred, a god. The Indians were afraid it might withdraw its gifts from them. To prevent this they worshipped it and appeased its wrath.

For the same reasons they worshipped the genital organs as many other primitive races did at the time. Later, greater security gave way to the old haphazard way of living, and most of the races forgot their primitive religions. When life was fairly secure—there was no need to pray for the things they were now able to produce in quantity.

But India never entirely forgot her old primitive religions. The reasons are too deep and complicated to discuss here ; it is sufficient to say that when the Aryans poured into India the Dravidians were still very primitive, and as the new stock settled down

they absorbed parts of the age-old religion of the hereditary population of India. The Brahmans, by setting the laws of caste, condemned millions to abysmal ignorance and poverty—two conditions unfavourable for their enlightenment either in religion or anything else.

So the phallic religion remained, and is still carried on in the hidden recesses of India.

Owing to the ceremonies and rituals carried on at these gatherings great secrecy prevails. Scattered over India there are thousands of these societies, but because of the nature of the ceremonies the meetings must be kept quiet. No one must know where certain people disappear to at night—except those who are 'safe.' If somebody wishes to join the 'lodge' they will find it easy enough—provided they show they are eligible and will not turn into a betrayer of the sacred vows and mystic rights in which they take part.

It must not be supposed that these 'lodges' form part of a vast secret organization that combines eroticism with religion. Far from it. They are all isolated, but a member of another group finds it easy enough to partake in another's ceremonies, if he has been called away from his own district, or is travelling the country as a religious ascetic.

The numbers and diversities of people who join these 'lodges' would amaze even the most cynical critic of the Indian character. Brahmans and those of low caste, lawyers and labourers all come to their lodges, some in the service of religion, some in the chains of desire.

The two greatest gods of the Hindu faith are Siva and Vishnu. Vishnu is a mild god, patient, and long-suffering, while Siva is hard and more austere, sometimes known as the 'destroyer.'

Siva, with his wife Kali or Sakti, represents the grimmer aspects of Hinduism. Kali, it will be

remembered, was the patron of the bomb perverts. It was long ago that the Hindus realized that Siva's wife would bring them in touch with their lord. They took up this worshipping of a goddess and soon Kali worship had grown to enormous proportions. In many cases Kali worship became a debased form of religion which, unfortunately, still exists to-day.

It is quite common in India to-day to find men carrying on their bodies the *linga* (male generative organ) to show they belong to a class of Sivites. The organs of birth are widely worn, both by men and women, in emblem form as part of their superstitious lives. It is this kind of custom which reminds one that the people of India are extremely backward.

There are certain *sadhus* who are votaries of the *linga* to-day, and find their cult a fairly profitable one. The Hindu women of India imagine that, by asking the advice of these devout disciples, they will obtain help from them if they are barren.

Thus, when the *sadhu* of the *linga* comes to the village a woman will appear and question him. The *sadhu* is naked but for a loincloth and the *linga* dangling from round his neck. The woman will first proffer him money, and, if he is satisfied, he will give her his advice in the matter of having a baby.

The Hindu woman has reason to be anxious if she has not delivered to her lord and master a son. The bearing of a son is a matter of such importance in India that the wife may be discarded in favour of another if she cannot bear her husband a male heir.

So the *sadhu* makes his money, and the wife returns happy in the thought that the holy man has helped her.

To wander round the Hindu temples means a journey into the realms of venery. Every kind and attitude of sexual love is portrayed in ornate carvings. In one such carving may be seen a god's wife embrac-



ing her husband's *linga*, in another animals and men cohabiting. That the carvings are indecent by Western standards there is no doubt, but they form a rich and colourful addition to the pageantry of Indian history. Such temples as the Black Pagoda and that at Jaganath form important contributions to the study of primitive art, and, to anyone who understands little of the niceties of Indian architecture or tradition, a journey round the places of worship is certainly an experience.

Kali, the wife of Siva, is worshipped by many Indians. Some of them bow to her more hideous forms, others to milder ones. In Bengal Kali worship has reached large proportions among the Hindus, and the south of India, too, favours this goddess. However we look at Kali worshippers we must admit that they form a depraved section of the Indian people, a sect out of touch with life and wandering into wrong paths. How much better for these worshippers if they owned allegiance to the kindly Vishnu, a god of simple folk, comforting and helpful.

At night these Kali worshippers will slip out of their houses and away to the temple. Outside stands a sentinel to ensure that all admitted know the password. Each of the worshippers approaches the entrance to the temple, mumbles an incomprehensible name to the sentry, and walks past the awesome portals into the half-light beyond. Let us follow these worshippers inside, to see the rites in which they are to take part.

The building is small, and constructed entirely of stone, out of which has been carved figures of the gods and pages from the legends of India. Here is Siva, and there his wife. The light only shows them dimly, and for part of the time they are invisible, for the two great flares that light the temple burn at the other end of the building, and it is only when the wind blows against the flame that the shadows dis-

appear from over Siva and he is lighted for an instant in a pale, sickly glare.

On a raised dais is the figure of Kali—loathsome and deformed with four arms and four hands, which squeeze the life-blood out of four writhing men. Her eyes look balefully down upon the worshippers, her tongue lolls from one corner of her mouth, bloody and horrible.

The ceremony has started some time ago, and now from a doorway by the side of the dais a figure emerges—a huge, powerful Indian, and eyes that gleam fanatically. He is dressed in pure white robes. He kneels in front of Kali and then faces the worshippers, his simplicity of appearance adding another touch of strangeness to the scene. A worshipper rises and advances towards the figure leading a kid. Respectfully he surrenders it to the white figure, bows low and returns to the ranks of the worshippers. The white figure takes the kid in his arms, raises it to his mouth, and puts his strong teeth into its throat.

With the premonition of animals when they know that death draws near, the kid kicks and bleats frantically, but the strong arms hold it tight, the teeth bite deeper into the fleshy throat, the blood gushes forth and spurts in a crimson stream over the face of the devourer and down his white garments. Then the kid is placed before Kali, the blood still spurting from the wound, and running in a shallow gutter outside the sacred precincts of the temple.

Another worshipper advances leading a kid. Again the ceremony is repeated. More lead their sacrifices up to the slaughter, while the white robes that clothe the body of the priest of Hinduism are sodden and covered in the blood of the animals. A rivulet of fresh blood flows from the sacrificial stone, over its sides in a waterfall, and along the conduit to the temple wall. From somewhere in the auditorium a

delirious woman rises, rushes towards the dais with a baby in her arms. Wrought up by the fanaticism and the hysteria of the moment, she takes her baby naked and crying, and plunges it into the stream of blood. A low murmur rises from the assembled Hindus. Frantically the woman screams, "Kali! Kali!" From the recesses at the back of the temple a priest approaches the hysterical woman and leads her back to her place.

All the kids have now been slaughtered. The slaughterer leaves the temple, a trail of blood marking his path. Another priest comes forward on to the dais and prays to Kali. The audience joins in, muttering in low tones. The prayer ceases and the priest again addresses the grim effigy. Then he begins to chant, a high-pitched, morbid incantation to which the assembled votaries of Kali readily respond. The priest continues chanting, his voice rising the while, when suddenly he falls flat upon his face and kisses the feet of the goddess. The climax is reached, the final vow is taken, and the worshippers file out.

That is one of the orgies in which the Hindus of India take part. Itself depraved, it drags them deeper into an abysmal mire, into a life of pessimism temporarily relieved by these fits of religious sadism.

Besides worshipping Kali, certain sects of Hindus worship the male organ of generation, the *linga*, and the female organ, the *yoni*. It has been observed how they are generally worn and worshipped by individuals. One of the favourite signs of the *linga* and the *yoni* is that of the triangle on its base with, on top of it, a triangle on its apex. The *yoni* is often symbolized in the form of a large *yoni* surrounded by nine smaller ones. Worshippers of the sexual organs are generally known as *saktas*.

The *linga* is a familiar ornament of the Hindu

temple. Usually of black marble, it is polished and kept clean and bright by the priest. This again is worshipped by barren women and all with sexual worries. Services are held to propitiate the god of the *linga* as they are, too, for the *yoni*.

These ceremonies are quite in keeping with the Hindu mentality, but when they go a stage further, when they become debased and obscene, then is there reason to say that the ceremonies form no part of the true Hindu character, and that they are just licentious debaucheries excused under the guise of religion. Every one of these worshippers knows secretly that the religion is only a cover, and that without the attendant ceremonies it would mean nothing.

So we find people of all classes votaries of the *yoni* cult, their lust breaking caste barriers and rendering each as depraved as the other. The religion is kept well hidden for some of its votaries are important and respected people, who frequent the temples in some kind of disguise.

Bengal is the favourite centre for these activities, although they are carried on in the southern Deccan as well. To the temples of the *linga* and the *yoni* come worshippers who have had a far too early sexual training.

In England occasionally we hear of people who through some inadvertent initiation into the mystery of sex at an early age grow up with a mania for strange and sadistic ceremonies.

In India these early excursions into sexual activities are more the rule than the exception. At a very early age the Indian youth is made sex-conscious. The boy is first taught either by his mother or by being accosted by a naked woman. The parents may arrange the latter course by sending the boy off on an errand along a road which they know will be deserted. Then by arrangement the woman

springs out from hiding in front of the boy and the work is done. Girls have similar experiences.

These factors all determine the future of the Indian youth. It establishes a much too early sexual craving which is soon satisfied if the youth marries young. Thus, when he is still in his 'teens,' he is a sexual maniac and capable of the most sordid actions.

Viewed this way, Saktism possesses just one fraction of an excuse. But however much you strive, you cannot totally eradicate the bad taste its rites leave in the mouth. The worship of paintings of nude women in which the *yoni* is the object of adoration; the worship of phallic symbols; the worship of real-life women, stark naked, in which again the *yoni* is the centre of attraction; the grotesque cannibal debauchery that follows, in which the partakers take for an instant the shape of the gods and portray their amatory deeds emblazoned on the stones and pillars of the temple; the excursion from the realms of licence into that of primitive savagery, are scenes more like the inside of a brothel than a place of worship.

To these happenings must be added the role of the temple prostitute, a beautiful young Indian girl, more comely than the majority of her sister Indians and more learned, too. She revolted when she was young against the conditions that surrounded her, or perhaps was sold into the profession by her parents. At any rate, it was a welcome change for her. Here she has the chance to understand and learn more and grows up a far less credulous and simple creature than other Indian girls. It is easy to admire the *devadasi*, or Indian prostitute.

Besides the *devadasi*, there is the male prostitute, not let it be imagined always for homo-sexual activities, but sometimes to help barren women out of the predicament they will be placed in if they

do not bear their husbands sons. They supply a necessary place in Indian life.

Sometimes the priest himself fulfils this role, but in many temples a number of young men are kept who administer to the wants of women.

Homo-sexuality itself is not a thing forgotten in India to-day. It deserves a number of pages in Indian history, and still to-day it could not be disposed of summarily. Many Indians still keep their harems where boys take the place of girls. In many cases, these boys are called on to portray tableaux and epics in the lives of the gods and other legendary lore of India.

A certain young Indian, with an adventurous spirit, decided he would attempt to get into one of the secret temples he had heard so much about.

He had been lucky to pick up the trail of one 'lodge' by talking to a certain woman in a nearby village. She had been talking of how she had been saved from being childless, not a very unusual statement, but one, which coupled with some other thoughtless words, put the Indian on the scent.

The same night he followed the woman from her house until she came to a temple some distance away. It seemed an ordinary sort of temple, of the usual ornate Hindu style. He decided that having got so far, he would go inside. Waiting patiently until a party of worshippers sought entrance, he joined them, and as they passed by the sentry, followed, muttering an incomprehensible password.

He passed inside without being molested and was soon praying with the rest. A man was standing before the figure of Kali and women passed up the aisle to kiss his *linga*. With eyes half-closed he watched the nauseating ceremonies.

The priest was working himself up into a fanatical zeal and bearing with him the minds and emotions of his audience. Easily excited, they began to sway

and roll in the seats as if hypnotized by the spell of the figure before them, invoking the sanction and aid of Kali for the service. After an hour of heated rites, in which every ornament in the temple played its part, the people were worked up to a fever pitch.

At long last came the crowning act of the evening. From the door, leading out by the side of the altar, a young Indian girl advanced to the front of the dais. Her figure had symmetry and suppleness, and she was very beautiful, with eyes that flashed in the light of the two great flares by her side, and a body that was covered in a thousand changing patterns by the eerie light. But for all the modesty of the shadows, no one in that audience could fail to see that she was stark naked.

## CHAPTER XII

### DOPE, GUNS, AND SMUGGLING

**I**NDIA is the land of opium, bhang, ganga, charas, and cocaine, where men smoke and inoculate themselves with drugs rather than drink 'a wee tot of Mother's ruin.'

The drug habit is hard to cure. To take drugs away from a man who has been increasing his rations and now accepts them as part of his routine is far more injurious than taking the whisky bottle away from an inveterate Western drinker.

Certain drugs have a free market in India. It must not, of course, be supposed that the majority of Indians use drugs. Most of them are far too poor for that. But a great many have cultivated the drug habit, and are unable to do without them.

Hashish and opium are the two principal drugs. These can be obtained fairly easily from the bazaars.

Hashish can be taken as a smoking mixture, a chewing compound, or a drink. It is well known for the sensations and excitements it produces. Taken in large quantities it can be extremely dangerous, producing delirium and mania, and sometimes compelling a man to do murder.

Under its influence all notions of time and space vanish. The body becomes spiritual and unattached, floating loftily amid its dreams, building here a structure which the material mind could never hope to rival for its beauty and artistry, there an evanescent, fleeting glimpse of abstract ideas and thoughts.



The drug brings sexual excitement also, and many people use it as a stimulant.

Opium is sold all over the country. India is one of the world's opium-producing lands and the drug is obtained from the opium poppy, a type considerably larger than the English field poppy. When the plants have reached a stage of maturity, the capsules are pierced with sharp knives. Through the holes that are formed a milky liquid exudes, which coats the outside of the capsule and turns dark brown.

Later it solidifies into a hard substance and is scraped off. Added to what has been scraped from other capsules, it is rolled into a large ball. This is known as gum opium and from it many drugs such as morphine, laudanum, and paregoric are made, besides opium itself.

'Smoking opium' is a product of gum opium. The gum opium is extracted with hot water, the liquid strained from the rest and heated to a glutinous stage.

When it reaches the smoker it looks like black treacle. It is then cooked over a small spirit-lamp, rolled into a pellet, and stuck on the pipe bowl with a skewer. The skewer is withdrawn and the smoke inhaled. The effect of opium is to produce a deep but dreamless sleep.

Recently there has been an alarming increase in the traffic and consumption of cocaine. Cocaine is not produced in India, but is imported from other countries, notably Japan, Germany, and America. Cocaine is forbidden in parts of India. Its use brings us to another side of secret India.

Prohibited drugs, and drugs with exceptionally high duties, are smuggled into India. Wealthy Indians who have cultivated the drug habit and find themselves unable to cure it are not always able to get their supplies, and with the case of a prohibited

drug these would be totally cut off were it not for the smugglers.

Cocaine is only let through the customs barriers for medical purposes. But many Indians have 'cultivated' the cocaine habit, and so the traffic goes on. Here is an illustration of how the drug smugglers work.

The sun was setting as the long black cargo boat from San Francisco steamed slowly up the Hoogly to Calcutta. It was a hot, still evening, and the smoke from her funnel rose in a slim straight line. Among the crew there was a peaceful, lazy expectation of the things in store in Calcutta. The handful of passengers the boat carried were gathered in the lounge. Only three passengers were up on deck.

The ship might have been sailing into the port of Eternal Bliss for all the notice that was taken of the dark, tree-covered sides of the river, or the three passengers who had assembled, smoking laconically, on the lower deck.

An observer of these men would have seen that, although they seemed to be engaged in idle conversation, they were keeping a close watch on the bank of the river.

Suddenly one of the men nudged his companions. On the bank something white had been waved. Taking his handkerchief from his pocket, the man waved in answer three times and then, with his accomplices, hurried into the cabin behind them.

They came out each carrying two large boxes. The sound of a motor boat could be heard in the distance.

The men lowered one of the boxes over the side of the boat by means of a rope, until, silently, it was floating on the water. Then the rope was unhooked and the other boxes lowered in the same way, until all were floating gently on the river.

The purring of the motor boat grew louder, and it became visible on the starboard side. It hailed the liner as it came past.

"H.M. Customs boat."

The steamer answered. For a moment the motor boat swayed, with engine cut out, twenty yards from the liner. Then as the steamer glided on up the river she steered slowly to a spot where, dimly against the wash of the bigger vessel, six dark shapes were visible.

Unobtrusively the six boxes were hauled aboard the motor boat. The three men who had been watching the manœuvres from the deck of the steamer waved their hands in farewell to the 'customs' boat and sauntered off below.

So another load of cocaine found its way into India. The illustration above forms just one of the many ways in which the dope dealers smuggle cocaine. The crooks had utilized a supposed customs boat to pick up the dope.

At one time the smugglers used to walk straight through the customs with the dope concealed on their bodies. But later, with the alarming increase in smuggling, customs regulations were tightened up. A few smugglers were caught and the example discouraged the rest of the fraternity, who got busy on more elaborate methods.

Calcutta is the centre of the dope trade. It is the first 'handling station' in India. The organizations are powerful and wealthy, and their agents are to be found in all the big towns. Their methods are the most cunning, the hardest to discover of any crook gangs in the world. The chiefs guarantee the absolute secrecy of their organization by having isolated workers all over the country and 'go-betweens.' Thus a member of the gang will only know the next man to him. The only exception to this rule is found higher up the gang scale, where the

influential workers know each other. There is no danger of them betraying each other, for it is worth their while, financially, to keep on at the dope trade.

And it is doubtful if there is any way out of the trade—except by death, whether natural or sudden. . . .

To show how ruthless these men are a paragraph from the *Morning Post* of September 1937 read as follows :

‘ A sub-inspector in the Excise Department of the Bombay Government has died from blows received while taking part in a raid in Taluka a week ago.

‘ Attacks on raiding parties are not unknown in the Bombay Presidency. Accordingly Excise officials in the worst areas are permitted to carry revolvers.’

The vast organization of the dope smugglers includes many types and classes.

First the dope has to be smuggled out of the country of its origin. We will, for example, take America as the manufacturing centre. Here a highly-paid, specialized staff prepared the cocaine. When ready it is delivered to an agent. The agent conceals it in the false top of a trunk or sends it inside a dummy book or other article to a Pacific coast port. Here the gang must have dockers working in conjunction with them. The dope reaches the dock-hand either straight from the agent, who probably knows him only as a number, or by post. In this case the dope will be sent to another ‘respectable’ person before it reaches the dock-hand. The dock-hand knows only the two men on either side of him, namely, the man who brings it from the factory and the one who takes it on the next stage of its journey. All he cares for is that he

gets his money and that he is not found out. He hands the dope on to someone on the boat, who takes charge of it during the journey. The trafficker on the boat may be a passenger or a member of the crew. To get it on to the boat is the hardest part of the adventurous journey of cocaine. Once on board it is comparatively safe.

As has been explained, when the boat sails up the Hoogly the dope is dropped overboard in air- and water-tight boxes, and the smugglers, having disguised their boat suitably either as a customs boat or other innocent craft, pick it up. The motor boat then continues downstream until it reached an old landing-stage, where the dope is taken off the boat and stored in a derelict building. The next day a car, travelling from Diamond Harbour up to Calcutta, calls at the shack, picks up the dope and conveys it to the gang's headquarters at Calcutta.

This is the nerve-centre of the whole organization. It is the distribution centre for India and the half-way house between manufacturer and consumer.

It will be situated in the underworld of Calcutta, in an unassuming shop. Inside, the shop is much the same as any other to be found in the Calcutta underworld. But beneath there is not just the ordinary basement, but one that has been enlarged and cut into two sections. In one the dope is piled high in packages each containing twelve smaller packages. In the other the electric light is glaring down upon an ordinary office, with ordinary desks and equipment. There is nothing to arouse suspicion in the ledgers or the files. The workers themselves appear respectable enough. The door that leads into the dope room is built as part of the wall, and is opened by means of a button placed judiciously in the wall. It would be extremely difficult for anyone to find it unless he knew just where to look. Similarly the door into the office is disguised and is

almost indistinguishable from the wall. Above, the gang controls an entirely respectable business and the office workers do not know what goes on down below. They have been told that it is a store-room—in some ways the explanation is correct—but they little think that they are employed by some of the most notorious dope smugglers in the world.

Perhaps there is one feature of the downstairs room that would make a suspicious person think. However hot it is a fire is always kept burning. Thus, if the suspicions of the police are aroused, all the incriminating documents can be placed on the fire and burnt while the minions of the law are nosing round upstairs.

The head of the gang is never seen at these offices. He remains in the best quarter of the city, at his hotel or large house.

Many of the residents in Calcutta would be surprised if they knew just who these smugglers were. The 'ever so nice' middle-aged man who sat at their table the other night would be revealed as no less than a financier of crooks.

These men are seldom revealed, for no one knows their identity except the managers of the smuggling network. The 'managers'—there may be ten of them—all know each other, and so do some of their inferiors. Three of them may be in Calcutta and another four in America. The other three will be spread over India at other vital distribution centres such as Delhi, Lahore, and Allahabad. Most of the packets of drugs eventually find their way up the Ganges Valley to the towns of the Punjab and the United Provinces.

For this purpose intermediaries or travellers are used to supply the other centres of India. These are usually Europeans, who are disguised as Mr. Jones 'touring India,' or Mr. Smith 'on a business trip to the Punjab.' They carry the dope round with

them in the engines of their motor cars, in books, and other innocent-looking baggage.

But usually there is little need for these precautions. The traveller is so obviously innocent, radiates respectability in such generous quantities, that it would seem the height of madness to arrest him—or her. . . .

For women are frequently employed, and form one of the deadliest sides of the dope trade, as the following will show.

I will relate the story just as it was told to me by a man whom I will call William Jones.

Jones had been a bank clerk in London, but had grown tired of the job and found work as a film extra at one of the leading British film-producing companies. There he had come into contact with many people—actors, actresses, technicians, and extras. Among these extras had been a girl named Joan, with whom he had formed a friendship. Later Jones contracted an illness of some kind and had to give up his film work temporarily. When he recovered he found that he was unable to get back into the film company. But a placid life was not the sort for him, so he joined the staff of a firm which had a big business in India and which he hoped would lead to adventure. He saw no more of Joan before he sailed for India on the firm's business. Later, when he was making a trip up to the Punjab, he alighted from the train at Delhi and was fumbling for his ticket on the platform when he looked up and saw Joan.

Naturally surprised, he went up and spoke to her. He was even more surprised at her behaviour. He could understand her being confused, but she seemed angry at him being there. His company was obviously unwanted. But this mystery of two British film extras meeting in Delhi wanted some explanation. Jones was not to be cut short in finding it.

He ordered a taxi to the hotel where the girl was staying and followed her into the loggia.

"You still haven't told me how you got here," the man asked.

The question seemed to embarrass her. Eventually she replied in a halting voice :

"Soon after you had been taken ill I found I was no longer wanted in England. So I decided to go to America for"—here there was a considerable pause—"a job in a film company."

"I went to Hollywood and tried to force every film company to sign me up. But it was useless. I couldn't get a job anywhere."

"Well, you look pretty prosperous now," Jones said in admiring tones.

"After trying to get a job on the films for so long I grew tired of it. So I took the train down to San Francisco and looked for office work. It wasn't long before I got a job with a company which trades with India. That is why I am here."

"A kind of commercial traveller, eh?" Jones inquired.

"You're right there," she answered, with, Jones thought, more meaning than was necessary.

The whole thing seemed a little far-fetched to him. *Was* she travelling for a San Francisco business firm? It seemed preposterous.

They moved into the lounge, Jones leaving the case which Joan had been carrying in the loggia. In the bewilderment of meeting a co-extra from England, Joan had forgotten about it. After they had been talking a while she asked him where it was.

"You left it in the loggia? I'll go and fetch it."

She got up suddenly and moved towards the door.

"That's all right," the man said, "I'll get it." Before she could answer he was out of the door.

He retrieved the case from the reception clerk and,



while returning with him, was bumped into by a servant. The case fell on the floor.

"Clumsy idiot!" he swore at the native.

The servant looked at him with grave anxiety, and then suddenly fled.

Jones picked himself up, dusted his clothes, and then examined the case.

It was of the small attaché type, and lay on the ground, open. Its contents had been flung across the floor of the corridor. They were the usual requisites of a woman traveller. They did not interest him. But something else did. The case must have been damaged in falling to the ground. The top of it had come apart, to reveal another compartment. He prised it open and found to his astonishment—little packets of cocaine!

He told me the story recently, and of what a quandary it put him in. "Not that the girl meant anything to me," he said.

"It was just the fact that I had known her in England as a good sort, yet here she was a dope smuggler.

"Evidently while she was in America she had got in with some of the vice traffickers and had somehow been wheedled into the trade. Goodness knows what methods they used."

"Well," I asked, "what did you do about it in the end?"

"I went back with her to her room and told her bluntly what I had found. This time she was composed and asked me what I was going to do about it. I pleaded with her to give the trade up and, if she did, I said I would remain quiet about her part in it."

"I can't do that," she said sadly. "You see, if I gave it up, as I have often thought of doing, I should be caught by the gang and killed. Oh, yes," she went on, "they think nothing of killing betrayers. I daren't give it up. It's more than my life's worth."

"But to go on means—sacrificing your soul to a band of crooks."

The girl broke down and started to sob.

"I'm so glad I met you here. At first I thought the business was honest and straight, later I found out. Then it was too late to go back. I don't know what to do!"

I remember Jones chewing at his pipe as he recounted the story to me. It was certainly an unenviable position for him and the girl. But he solved the problem. How he did so forms another story. But it shows how these smugglers use women for their nefarious practices. In many cases these women conceal the drugs in the heels of their shoes. Some women take to this form of vice as preferable to others, but numbers of them are duped into the cocaine trade and find it extremely difficult to get out of it.

It would be hard to give a full description of the methods the smugglers take to prevent their secrets becoming known. Besides intermediaries all sorts of secret devices are used to convey news from one drug centre to another. Codified telegrams are perhaps the most popular method for quick transmission. In a recent smuggling case the gang was revealed by the telegraph authorities becoming suspicious of the messages which were sent between two centres.

With luck, the dope gang can carry on for years unsuspected. If one member of the gang is caught, there is little likelihood that the rest will be as it is only the people in authority who know each other. They make sure that they are never in any trouble.

Recently a gang was caught. A European, who was serving a sentence in jail, turned approver and gave the whole gang away. If it had not been for this, they might still be carrying on their insidious trade.

While the people of Calcutta go about their

business, while the hemp merchants ship their loads on to cargo boats bound for Scotland, while the English quarter entertains and is entertained, while the Kali worshippers offer up their sacrifices, the secret trade goes on, guarded by the widest ramifications, almost impenetrable.

Amongst the many articles that are smuggled into India there is a group that is specially interesting. It comes under the name of armaments, and the people engaged in smuggling armaments are generally called gun-runners.

A few years ago an unhappy Indian was hauled off to prison in Calcutta by the police. Later he was brought before a magistrate and given a stiff sentence in jail. His offence was the possession of two ancient revolvers, which he had intended to present to his friends in the dacoity business.

While the coolie toiled in prison, ships left every port in Europe carrying oranges, timber, meat, and other goods to India. Sandwiched between the mixed cargoes were some hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of rifles, revolvers, machine-guns, and ammunition, which were in due course landed at various ports, or dumped ashore at some pre-arranged coastal rendezvous. The commanders of these ships were bluff, good fellows — and they never visited an Indian prison. Neither did the fat continentals who supplied the weapons in defiance of international law.

These weapons were intended for the Bengal anarchists. They paid big money and they received poor guns, but they were guns and that was all that mattered. A favourite trick of some merchants was to supply the guns, and then charge tip-top prices for ammunition. It did not worry them that a couple of extra villages had to be looted to pay them. Devilish as armed robbers in Bengal are, the men who supply Bengal anarchists are far more fiendish,

a far graver menace to society as a whole than the poor coolie I have mentioned.

In India there is another menace that should no longer be tolerated. It is the man who finances the anarchists so that they can buy arms. This person is directly responsible for the bloodshed when anarchist meets policeman in rioting. He is the reason for the gun-running trade. Why does he do it? The question is a perplexing one.

It has been explained how a certain type of Indian business man stirs up trouble against the British with high hopes of bringing about a boycott of British goods, so that he can sell his own—at a price. For the reason that he stirs up trouble, he must have guns. This, then, is the reason for the gun-runners' existence in India. The policy of stirring up trouble is, of course, short-sighted, for without the British in India, the position of Indian merchants would be far worse.

Sometimes the anarchists have to fall back on dacoity for money. A gang of dacoits is employed to rob a village of its wealth. The money is used : (a) to enable Bengal anarchists to kill their fellows and the British ; (b) to enable certain German gun manufacturers to grow even fatter. It is surprising just how many arms this money buys.

A great many guns are smuggled across the various frontiers. In this trade Soviet Russia plays a large hand. Many more come through the ports of India. With body well-greased, the thief steals silently up to a sentry, grasps his rifle, and runs off with it.

There is an amazing organization of gun-runners into India—especially in Bengal. Financed by rich business men, they employ the seamen of cargo boats who visit the ports to bring arms for them.

The Indian will approach a seaman on board a boat of any nationality, and suggest he might buy

a revolver when next he is in Europe and bring it back with him. The Indian may advance the money for the purchase of the firearm straight away, on agreement with the seaman. On the other hand, he may be doubtful of the seaman's integrity and have visions of his money disappearing over the bar of some seaport tavern. In that case, if the sailor and the Indian have come to terms, the sailor agrees to buy the revolver with his own money, and the Indian agrees to pay the sailor when the gun reaches India.

Once the supplier has bought the gun, he finds little difficulty in getting it ashore. In fact he need not worry about it at all. He will just leave it secluded in his cabin, and tip off the native when he gets away from the boat. A clever burglar is then sent to board the ship and take possession of the revolver.

An ordinary revolver will cost anything up to £30. A modern weapon made by a world-renowned maker will sometimes fetch £60.

It is notorious that many sailors on American vessels are gun-runners. Their skippers usually know if they are smuggling guns, but steps are seldom taken to stop the harmful trade. Some sailors make as much as £300 a year out of the smuggling business.

Customs officials and police are always watching the docks for gun and dope traffickers. Sometimes a smuggler is caught and then punishment is meted out severely. A German sailor was flogged and given a long sentence in jail. But such examples have not resulted in a decrease in the gun-running trade.

In England we know little of the battles that wage between the police and the Indian crook and extremist. Even when we hear that a distinguished member of the Indian police has been killed we seldom know the details of the case.

## DOPE, GUNS, AND SMUGGLING

There have been some desperate encounters between police and smugglers in the little-known quarters of the Calcutta underworld, or the native quarter of Delhi.

Perhaps the gun-running is carried on, on a grander scale, by means of a gang of smugglers with headquarters, say in Calcutta, and agents working through the boats. There will be a central warehouse where the guns are hidden and where business is carried on. The whole business will be under the 'protection' of a rich Indian. Arrangements will be made to ensure that the local anarchists and extremists get the guns.

The police, probably through the Secret Service, hear of these arrangements, and instructions are issued for a band of police to raid the warehouse one night. As every policeman in Calcutta has his 'shadow' the crooks will know, some time before the raid starts, that things are moving.

They may have time to clear the warehouse of all incriminating articles and papers. If not they will be prepared to defend it. The police advance on the den of contraband goods. On one side the river flows past slowly. Upon it rides an open boat, with slim bows and powerful engines. In it crouch five men. More police. Round the warehouse the cordon spreads, until the place is completely encompassed.

The door is then forced. A shot is fired from a window above and a policeman falls, while his comrades return fire. spurts of yellow flame light the scene.

The police are inside the house and a breathless fight follows. On the landing above them, two Indians are lying, shooting over their forearms. A policeman drops, another fires, and one of the forms on the landing gives a groan and rolls over on its side. The other raises himself and flies back

to safety. The police climb the stairs and grapple with their assailants. A whistle sounds shrilly from outside the house. Another boat can be heard racing up river. Reinforcements, to land and overwhelm the Indians by force of superior numbers. The fight is finished. Seven Indians lie upon the floor, dead—or breathing their last gasps. Two policemen also lie still. The remaining Indians are crowded together, sullenly defiant. They are searched for arms, five policemen are picketed to guard the store of arms that has been found in an underground room, and the rest leave by the river. That is the last the Calcutta underworld will see for some time of those smugglers who were lucky to get away with their lives.

The police have only cut the top off the weed. There is still a root which feeds more leaves. It is not until that root has been dug out of the fertile Indian soil that the menace will be finally and effectively combated.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE TERRORS OF MARRIAGE

**I**NDIAN women are called upon to acknowledge their husbands as gods, their life, their all. Once a girl has been given in marriage, which is at a very early age, she must know nothing but the demands of her husband. She supplies his desires and is rewarded by complete ignorance in almost everything that concerns this life.

An excellent contrast is afforded by studying the conditions of women in India and Soviet Russia, respectively.

In Russia women are free and allowed to take up whatever profession they please. They can enter into marriage when they want to and terminate it just as easily. If they do not care for marriage, then they need not marry.

But in India a very different spectacle greets the eye. Here women are in bondage, in the most primitive, aboriginal slavery.

The case of woman's lot in India revolves around the question of child-marriage. Marriages can be of two kinds in India, the Brahma form, or the Asura. The Brahma is mainly limited to the higher castes, while the Asura is practised by the lower.

In the former type of marriage, the bride's father gives the bride to the bridegroom as a gift. The marriage ceremony begins with the ceremonial bathing of the bride, after the father has had a few words to say. On the following day the bridegroom accepts the bride's hand; and together they perform



the most solemn and important ceremony of the marriage, the walk round the sacred fire. Together they take seven steps round the fire, at each step repeating a sacred rite. After the seventh step has been taken, the bride and bridegroom can declare themselves married. The bride then becomes a member of her husband's family.

The other form of marriage is purely a business transaction. It is arranged by the bridegroom paying as much as he can for his wife. The higher castes are not allowed to indulge in this type of marriage, and it is left to the two lowest classes, the Vaisyas and the Sudras, and all the sub-castes of the same.

Hindus have to marry outside their *gotra* or family. They must not be related within six generations on the father's side, or within five on the mother's. Marriage must, of course, be within the caste. Hindus may marry any number of wives, but a woman may know only one husband. Not long ago, virgin widows, that is to say, widows who had married in childhood, but whose marriage had never been consummated, were not allowed to re-marry, but nowadays they may. By an act of 1923 people of two different castes may wed.

Mohammedan marriage differs appreciably from the Hindu. Sometimes children are married before puberty, but the practice is not so prevalent as it is among the Hindus. The only bars to marriage are consanguinity, that is, marriage within the family, and the wife must be a Mohammedan, Jewess, or Christian. A Mohammedan woman can only marry a Mohammedan.

Since the westernization of India controversy has raged over the question of child-marriage, defended by the conservative Brahmans and violently opposed by the reforming Indians and the British. But the custom of child-marriage is ingrained in the Indian

body, and even if it could be officially banned (it is almost impossible) child marriage would still continue secretly for many years.

Years ago the Brahmans, as the only educated majority in India, opposed any steps to end child-marriage. Even to-day there is a great aversion to disobeying the Brahman's holy commands. Not, of course, that the Indian wants to. Marrying young is his duty, and it is the duty of the parents to see that the marriage is arranged. By the sacred laws of the Brahmans, if a child is married as late as the eleventh year of his life, his parents in the next life will be re-incarnated as the lowest form of animal—and it will take them many lives to rise to a better type.

This, then, is the deadly fate to which the Indian is condemned if he disobeys the sacred laws. Small wonder that he dare not.

The ethics of child-marriage are based on the purest principles. They are, unfortunately, short-sighted and lead to many abuses. Child-marriage is responsible to a large extent for the weedy stock of Hindu India.

The object of marrying young is to prevent the harmfulness of lust. If you marry before achieving puberty and immediately that stage is reached you live with your wife, then the sacred indivisibility of marriage is achieved, marriage has been consummated before sexual intercourse with any other man or woman. Originally, after the husband's death, the wife was condemned to be burnt on his funeral pyre, but that has been abolished. It all shows to what lengths indivisibility can go. One of the original reasons for the laws regarding early marriage was that Indian women were supposed to be five times more desirous than men, and if they were not married quickly, the most terrible scandals would ensue.

But what of the abuses of child marriage ? What of the crimes that are perpetrated under its guise ? What of the unhealthy race it breeds, the women—to the number of thousands a year—whom it kills ?

These are questions that not even the most mystical Brahman can answer satisfactorily. It needs a little more than sacred creeds and gospels to answer for the enormous number of women bearing children who die in childbirth, or for why, after one day of marriage, a wife is crippled for the rest of her life.

A girl may become a mother in India at any time after eight years of age. It is not often that a girl so young as eight bears a child, but it happens to many at nine. Not unnaturally this breeds an unhealthy stock. A race which has been reared for centuries from undeveloped mothers will naturally be weedy and prone to illness.

When two Hindus are married, they do not go to live in a house of their own. The wife joins the husband's parents' household and becomes the servant of both husband and mother-in-law. Her duty is to love and adore them both, while being vastly inferior to them. It is a living hell on earth, and one that has caused many tragedies.

Then again the young wife is taunted until she bears her husband a child. In the matter of childbirth she is lucky if she comes out of the experience unharmed. Childbirth is more than a necessity in India. The delivering of a son is the most important item of a woman's existence, not only because it satisfies the parental yearning and guarantees an heir to the family property, but because it has a religious side, in which the son, and the son only, pays the last religious rites to the bodies of his father and mother.

But although childbirth is a thing to be feared in India, the Indian woman welcomes it, for without a

## THE TERRORS OF MARRIAGE

son she cannot hope to retain her husband's affection. It is for this reason that women consort with the *sadhus* of the *linga* and ask the advice of the temple priest.

When a woman is about to deliver her child she immediately becomes unclean. This unfortunate fact determines the whole course that subsequent events take, the filthy midwife, the stuffy, dirty quarter in which the young mother is housed, and the extreme danger to which the whole event exposes her.

First of all, the expectant mother prepares the dirtiest, stuffiest room in the house for the chamber where she is to deliver her child. Everything must be of the poorest available quality. Coarse matting will do for the bed, rags with which to cover her. When the pains begin the midwife is immediately sent for. Childbirth being unclean, women of the lowest (and dirtiest) caste are employed. If they happen to be dressed in good clothes when they get the summons they change into rags before going to the bedside.

The expectant mother lies on her rags in one corner of the room, screened from air and light by a dirty old blanket, the windows are stopped up with rags and paper, the floors and walls smeared with mud and cow-dung.

If the mother experiences delay, the midwife must know the reason. Thrusting her arm, slimed with dirt and cow-dung, into the woman's body, she drags out by force whatever is there.

In some cases the midwife pummels the woman's stomach while she lies on the ground. After the child has been born, the after-birth is removed by standing the patient against the wall and rubbing her abdomen.

The only instruments used in childbirth cases are the bare, dirty hands of the midwife. After birth, the mother is forbidden anything nourishing and

lives on drugs. The child is not put to the breast for four days. Sometimes it is fed on its own urine mixed with sugar.

The position of utter disrepute among midwives is held by the cord-cutter. This is the lowest task that anyone can be put to, so you can judge the type of woman employed for it. The cord-cutter uses an old piece of tin, a piece of splintered wood, a rusty nail, or an out-of-use knife. The cord is then tied with a dirty piece of cord, and treated with charcoal or cow-dung.

After these experiences there is small wonder that the girl-mother is crippled for life, or unable to bear children again. A famous American writer on India has estimated that 3,200,000 mothers die in a generation, which does not sound surprising. The rate of infant mortality is correspondingly high.

When girl children are born they are sometimes killed there and then. Girls, you see, are no use to father, either at his burial or in his old age, when he needs someone to look after him.

Some parents dispose of unwanted girls by selling them to dealers. Eventually these girls become prostitutes, either in the temples or the 'houses on the wall.'

These 'houses on the wall' have been described by many famous writers on India—notably Rudyard Kipling. But the most interesting point about them is that many of their patrons do not visit them for sexual satisfaction, but to get away from the ignorance of their families. As I have pointed out, the Indian wife recognizes nothing in this life but her husband. He is her all, which leads him to desperate lengths to find intelligent company.

Prostitutes of the Indian type, as distinct from the Western, are intelligent creatures. They are the most comely sect of women in India, can dance well, and are witty.

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To a rendezvous upon the wall of the town goes the Indian when he is in need of a change of company, to discuss with these girls and to watch them dance. Needless to say, some of these houses form meeting-places for dangerous revolutionaries, where plans can be discussed in peace. Many are the plots that prostitutes in these houses have unearthed, and many are the revolutionary lovers they have entertained. A visit to one of these establishments is an experience and one that could be spoken of quite openly.

To return to the question of Indian married life. Originally, when the husband died, the wife was supposed to die with him on his funeral pyre. This custom is known as suttee and was forbidden by the British Government in 1829.

It is thought that in early times it was introduced to ensure that the husband was not poisoned by the wife. By commanding that a wife be burned on her husband's death the Indians guaranteed that the wife would pray for her husband's long life and not try any trickery. But there is a religious *motif* to suttee as well, and for this reason, even to-day, isolated cases of women committing suttee, or attempting to, are recorded. The woman works herself into a religious mania and then throws herself on to the burning funeral pyre.

Women may deliberately commit suttee to save themselves from the dire penalties that widowhood entails. A widow is a guilty, wretched creature. Her head must be shorn of hair, she must take no part in celebrations, she must do the lowest household work, and continually be spoken to harshly and contemptuously.

No wonder that this terrible fate leads to crime, to suicide, even prostitution. Before she can suffer the torments that will be her lot, the woman often flees from the household or burns herself.

By the canons of Hinduism, it is impossible for a

widow to re-marry. This would be destroying the complete idea of Indian marriage. But in any case, if the woman desired to marry again, it is unlikely that she would be able to find a partner, for Indians generally show a preference for young girls.

It is the second type of marriage, the Asura type, that leads to the real abuses in the Indian marriage field. Many stories could be told of young girls married to old and hideous men to satisfy the latter's waning desires. A trip round the hospitals of India will show the result. Here a child maimed for life after one day of marriage. There another with legs and thighs completely paralysed through inhuman use. Another has had her abdomen completely ruined because her husband had satisfied his lust in an abnormal manner. Such facts as these could be supplemented indefinitely. The parents of these girl children are only too pleased to have one mouth less to feed, and so the girl is sold to her dreadful fate.

The unnatural lust of the average Hindu is partly the result of his early home life. He is brought into a home in which his mother is only a chattel for his father's use, when he so desires—which may be as often as three times a day—and so his sexual appetite is sharpened at a very early age, when he should be indulging in healthy sports.

Many types of abuse wait upon the Asura type of marriage. A short while ago the noise of screams from a girl's orphanage near Calcutta gave rise to an inquiry into the affairs of the orphanage, in which was revealed one of the most callous and ruthless sides of Indian crime. After the story had been unravelled it was found that certain philanthropists, who were outwardly looking after a girls' orphanage, were in reality selling these girls to desirous Indians for profit.

The 'Orphanage System,' as it has been dubbed,



MYLAPORE



THE JAIN TEMPLE, CALCUTTA





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is usually run by influential and wealthy Indians, whose scruples so far as profits go are not very considerable. The methods of such a seemingly beneficent welfare centre are these :

Agents are commissioned to watch out for stray girls, or to visit parents with a view to buying unwanted female children. Whether girls are kidnapped, or bought from the parents, a surprising number find their way into these orphanages.

Once inside these benevolent institutions, life proceeds normally for a few days, despite the poverty of the interior, almost barrack-like in its bareness, and the miserable rations of food. The girls are set about the housework and other tasks.

One day a girl receives a summons to go to the principal's room. Then, to her horror, the true motives of her stay are revealed to her. She is to be married to a man whom she has never seen before !

To some girls this form of marriage is terrifying and hideous. Although the custom is common in India, there are many girls who willingly submit on account of their religious superstition and fear of their parents. But when it becomes apparent that an outside agent is to arrange a marriage, perhaps miles away, solely for the purpose of turning the girls over at a profit, marriage takes on a fearful aspect. Some girls refuse to be sold in such a way. But the warders have different ideas.

All the entreaties in the world are not enough to secure their release. Once inside those grim walls, the girls never leave unless it is to marry.

If reasoning fails with one of these 'stubborn creatures' other methods have to be tried. Solitary confinement is the first punishment. If this brings no result the girl is given no food and chained to a cell wall.

Terrible things have been known to happen to girls, half-starved, maddened by solitary confine-

ment, and with incessant thoughts of an unwelcome marriage before them. At length, beaten and cowed, the girl consents to be married.

The ferocious methods used to browbeat the girls were revealed in the inquiry into the conduct of an orphanage in a famous city. Public feeling, incensed by the knowledge that justice was being thwarted, demanded the inquiry. It became known that the girls often travelled across India to become the wives of all sorts and conditions of men, some of them totally unsuited in age. Old men especially were customers of this pseudo-philanthropic establishment. The parties to an Indian marriage are sometimes unknown to each other, but when one of them is perhaps forty years the senior of the other, even the most suave Indian maid must pale at the thought of such an unnatural match.

Other types of the 'marriage ramp' abound in India, and just such a one is the case of a girl employed by a group of Indian crooks, one of whom pretended to be her father.

Among members of the lowest castes the price paid for a wife is small, but higher in the 'social' list the price rises, so that at the top immeasurably greater sums are paid.

So this band of crooks took a girl from the lowest caste, and with her 'father' disguised as a wealthy merchant, and belonging to a far higher caste, attempted to find a husband.

At last one was found of the same high caste as the 'father' pretended to be. A suitable sum was offered for her, the 'father' agreed, and the wedding took place. The husband was quite satisfied with his side of the bargain until, while out with his wife in the bazaar, she disappeared and was never seen by him again.

The girl returned to her employers. Five times more she was married under the same circumstances,

and then her employers were caught in another aspect of the crime game, and the whole of their profitable 'marriage' business came to light.

The hereditary criminal tribes of India display more ruthless methods. They descend on a village, lay about the menfolk, and carry off the women for marriage purposes. Again they pretend these women are of a higher caste. Some of them are already married. That does not matter to a band of robbers who are only concerned with the profit they can make, not with moral 'ifs.'

The peculiarities of the Indian marriage system bring other evils in their train besides those of crooks and fakes. 'All the world loves a lover,' but not in India, because when two people really begin to love they will, in nine cases out of ten, be committing an unpardonable sin.

Before man and woman can know their minds about who is the ideal companion for them, who is to share the rest of their life, they have been tied hand and foot to someone whom they may never have seen, and whom, it is certain, they can have no knowledge that he or she will be the ideal companion. To ask a boy of eight whom he considers would be his ideal wife would be considered rank madness in England. So it would in India, for marriage there is an auction, and anyone who does not like his wife (after she has been chosen for him) has to lump it. Thus it is not uncommon to find real love entering the lives of Indians when they reach a state of maturity.

Love is one of the only things in the world that centuries of tradition and custom cannot really harness. In lands where the women are treated as the chattels of men, age-old law decrees that they shall lead a rigid life, devoted to the service of their man and master. It may seem that love is submerged and runs to schedule. Ninety-nine times

out of a hundred it may be so—but that hundredth time !

One of the greatest joys in the life of woman is to be able to preen herself before male admirers. A greater thrill even than the treasures of love itself is when woman meets man and automatically knows that between them a spirit of unity is born. The silent language that is spoken with the eyes conveys a clearer message than ever can words of the mouth.

Every young woman, whether she comes from Manchester or Madras, Manhattan or Malaya, revels in the thrill of meeting strange men and hearing sweet words, even if she knows that they are empty. And as this principle applies to every female being, it is not surprising that every now and then, in the lands where it is discouraged, women kick over the traces. It is also woman's prerogative to dream, and even if you take a girl and marry her off before she knows what is happening, turn her into an uncared-for incubator for the rearing of sons, you cannot take away her dreams.

Thus every now and again, in India, the love drama crops up. To-day, in England, love dramas have become too common to arouse much interest, unless those concerned have done something to attract the attention of Fleet Street. Many English wives claim the right to continue their friendship with old boy friends even after marriage, and if the wife slips as far as spending the week-end at Brighton with the said boy friend, there is just one more unnoticed case for a learned judge to dwell on. A few heart-pangs, and, very likely, another marriage. The habit of taking physical steps to restrain wives has gone out of fashion. In India it remains, and unfaithfulness may end in death. Death may come with much lesser sin than unfaithfulness. An Indian wife's coy glance at a neighbour, a stray piece

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of scandal reaching the ears of her husband, may bring about the most fearful climax.

The 'other' man may find one day, on his return home, the dead body of his eldest son lying battered by the door. The straying wife may be battered and beaten nearly to death. A sharp knife may so disfigure her so that the husband has a gilt-edged policy that no man will ever glance with eyes of love at her again. The husbands may live immoral lives, but that does not enter the argument—at least as far as they are concerned. Indian husbands have a most annoying habit of refusing to believe their wives when told that, because they have looked or spoken to another man, it does not mean to say they have been unfaithful, though if the said husband were to put his head in a bucket of cold water, go to a lonely place and do two minutes' quiet thinking, he would see that his wife was telling the truth. The Indian husband does not choose to think. He acts on the spur of the moment according to the dictates of his heart.

The most usual case into which the drama of marriage and love enters is when a young and comely young maid is married to a venomous old Indian debauchee.

From Southern India comes the story of how a young Indian maiden had married just such a man. She was still only a girl, perhaps fourteen, but old enough to appreciate the qualities of the opposite sex. Her husband had married her for the sole use of her body. The girl might just as well have been the arm-chair for all the love that was felt between the two. So she lived, a worthless chattel, until one day she met a young man of the village.

The occasion had been one perfectly justified by all common standards. She had tripped over some obstacle while returning from the well, and he, jokingly, had assisted her to her feet. But it was not

an incident to be remembered by wise wives, for such news as this reaching the ears of her master might lead to dire penalties.

The old man, fortunately, did not hear about this first chance meeting. But the youth had been a victim of 'love at first sight,' and his frequent excursions past the front door of the house, where the old man and the girl lived, caused considerable anxiety to the young wife.

One day, after a night of unwilling obedience to her husband, the girl was feeling more than a little unhappy. She began to feel the bonds of this infamous match draw tight around her, pictured herself in a few years time—if she was lucky and lived that long—a sluttish, pain-wracked, prematurely old woman, on to the time when her husband died, and she was left, a wretched widow.

So she waived aside restrictions, gave way to her natural impulses, and sped from the house to the side of the man she loved. That day she forgot everything except his presence and the new, sacred love that had grown between them. Late that afternoon they returned to the village separately.

That was the last the young man saw of his lover—in a fit condition to be seen. She paid the price of her day's joy, for when her husband became suspicious of her day's outing and investigated the matter with help from the village, the whole affair came out and the wife suffered by the knife her husband had hastily picked up.

When they took her away for burial, she was so terribly mutilated that identification was impossible. The young man himself was so torn by remorse that he committed suicide.

## CHAPTER XIV

### INDIA'S MYSTERY CITIES OF THE PAST

**I**NDIA has many mystery cities of the past, cities of the dead where no dead are found. No work on this strange and vast country would be complete without part, at least, of their story.

Visitors in hundreds come to India every cold weather, the majority of whom carry out a pre-arranged circular tour, during which they visit Agra, Delhi, Benares, and other places of note. But of all these visitors how few have ever heard of the deserted city! Yet even in its desolation, Mandu, for picturesqueness, archæological and architectural interest, is more than a rival to its more favoured sister cities.

This interesting place is not inaccessible to visitors. The position of Mandu, crowning the escarpment of the Vindhya Range, whence it still looks down with lordly frown upon the Narvada Valley, is one such as few cities can boast, and the old city walls, nearly forty miles in circuit, bear testimony to its past greatness. Little is known of the history of Mandu until the Mohammedan period, but legend declares that it was founded by Deo Bais in the sixth century. However that may be, Sanskrit inscriptions discovered in 1900 show that Mandu (Mandapa Durga) was an important centre in the time of the early Paramara king, from whom the present ruling family of Dhar claim descent. Two kings, at least, of this line are famous in legend and history, namely Munja Vakpati in the



tenth, Band Bhoja in the eleventh century, the latter being a great patron of literature.

Most of the Moghul emperors visited this delectable spot at some time during their lives, either in peace or in war. The Emperor Akbar besieged and took it in the year 1564, his presence in these parts being recorded upon the great 'Lat' or Iron pillar now at Dhar. On account of the resistance which had been offered, Akbar partially dismantled the place to prevent its again becoming a centre of rebellion. Jehangir, Akbar's son, spent over a year at Mandu in about 1615, being visited there by Sir Thomas Row, the ambassador of King James I of England to the court of the great Moghul. Sha Jahan, when, as Prince Khurram, in rebellion against his father Jehangir, retreated to Mandu; where later he also stayed as emperor. With the waning of Moghul power after the death of Aurungzebe, the incursions of the Maharattas commenced, predatory bands took the place of imperial pomp and splendour, and Mandu became deserted and desolate as we see it to-day.

Thanks to Moghul historians, the memoirs of Jehangir himself, and the evidence of Sir Thomas Row, we can form some idea of Mandu as it was in those days. Jehangir, after referring to the partial dismantling of the place by his father, Akbar, continues. . . . 'I have further to observe that at the time when I found it necessary to erect my victorious standard for the purpose of chastising the refractory rulers of Southern India, I came to the vicinity of this celebrated place, and ascended to view its stupendous ruins. I found the walls only demolished in part, and I became so highly delighted with the freshness and salubrity of the air, that I determined to restore the town. For this purpose I accordingly ordered the foundations to be marked out among the ruins of the ancient city, of a variety

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of spacious and lofty structures of every description, which were carried to a completion in a much shorter space of time than might have been expected.'

Jehangir and his beloved Nur Mahal doubtless missed at Mandu some of the luxuries to which they were accustomed in their northern capital, but that they maintained even here a considerable degree of pomp and splendour is witnessed by records of the period, a quotation from which may assist in reconstructing court life in Mandu in the days of old.

A parade of elephants on the Emperor's birthday must have been an imposing sight and is described by Sir Thomas Row in the following passage. Jehangir himself he describes as 'so rich in jewels that I own in my life I never saw such inestimable wealth together.' Of the processions he says: 'The time was spent in bringing his greatest elephants before him, some of which, being lord elephants, had their chains, bells, and furniture of gold and silver. In this manner about twelve companies passed by, most richly adorned, the first having all the plates on his breast and head set with rubies and emeralds, being a beast of wonderful bulk and beauty. They all bowed down before the King, making their reverence very handsomely; this was the finest show of beasts I ever saw.'

The Mohammedans' precept regarding the use of strong liquors was evidently universally ignored at this period, for Sir Thomas often alludes to it, saying of the Emperor on one occasion that he 'found him so near drunk that he made it up in half an hour, so that I could move no business to him.' Again in writing to England he says: 'There is nothing more welcome here, nor did I ever see men so fond of drink as are the King and the Prince of red wine.'

Thanks to the good workmanship of the old master-builders, and partly to the interest of Lord

Curzon, and the solicitude of H.H. the Maharaja of Dhar, in spite of its decay there is still plenty left in Mandu to give us an idea of the greatness from which it has fallen. When approaching it from the north, even at some distance before reaching the great ravine, which forms a strong natural line of defence without the city walls, the remains of mausoleums, pavilions, and other buildings, great and small, recall many a nameless soldier and saint, courtier and cavalier, who were laid to rest in the shadow of the great fortress where they have lived and loved, fought and intrigued. Within the city walls the buildings which claim one's chief attention are the two great gates called the Delhi and Tarapur gates, the Juma Masjid, Hushang Shah's tomb, the Hindola Mahal, the Jahaz Mahal, and the Lal Kothi.

Besides these there are Baz Bahadur's palace, the Reva Khund, or tank near which the palace stands, and Rup Mati's Chhatri, which all enter into the legends of Mandu. Let them, therefore, be disposed of first. It is stated that one day Baz Bahadur was on a hunting expedition on the banks of the Narbada, when his attention was arrested by hearing the most exquisite melody which issued from a grove of trees by the river-side. Further investigation showed a lovely Hindu maiden, Rup Mati, singing so sweetly that even the birds and animals were held spell-bound by her voice. Baz Bahadur, smitten at once by Cupid's dart, pressed his suit, but the maiden, hesitating to accede to an offer of marriage from a Mohammedan, even though he was of Royal blood, answered to all his entreaties, 'when the Narbada shall flow through Mandu, I will be your bride, but not till then.'

As Mandu is some 1,500 feet above the Narbada the royal lover's chances seemed poor; but the sympathetic river god coming to the rescue, told

Baz Bahadur to go to Mandu, to search for the sacred tamarisk such as grew upon the banks of the river, and to dig where it was found. At that spot would be discovered a spring of pure water, the original source of which was the River Narbada, and so might Rup Mati's condition and Baz Bahadur's desire be fulfilled. Sure enough the tamarisk and spring were found and a tank formed, now called the Reva Khund, beside which Baz Bahadur built a palace for his bride. Moreover, on the edge of the southern escarpment of the Vindhya, above the palace and tank, Baz Bahadur built a house for Rup Mati, on the roof of which are two cupolas of 'Chhatris' commanding a wide view of her beloved Narbada Valley and the Satpura Range beyond.

Even now, in its stately ruins, the Delhi gate is a delight to the beholder, and is a fitting relic of the pomp and pageant, fight and foray of which it must have been a witness. The Juma Masjid, or great mosque, built by Hushang Shah, is a fine example of Pathan architecture, the early origin of which is betokened by its lack of minarets and imposing mass, which give an impression of solidity and strength in contrast to the lighter and more highly decorated buildings of the later Mohammedan period. A broad flight of steps gives entrance to a large court some two hundred and fifty yards square, surrounded by a fine colonnade. The whole building derives an air of impressive solemnity and grandeur from the very simplicity and scale on which it is planned. The Hindola Mahal or Cradle Palace, so called from its likeness to the form of a native cradle, is a most interesting specimen of pure Pathan architecture. Massive strength, as in most works of early origin, is the main feature of the sloping buttressed walls, some sixteen feet thick at the base. Though generally termed a *mahal* or palace it was probably

a *darbar* or banqueting-hall, in which, from the privacy of the screened galleries, the ladies of the court no doubt witnessed many an imposing function and, it is feared, many a revel only too festive.

Hushang Shah's mausoleum, in which the marble tomb of that ruler is placed centrally under a fine dome, is in a fair state of repair. The large, domed roof gives a wonderful echo to any sound uttered within the building which is situated in the rear of the great mosque. The pillars of a colonnade nearby, sometimes described as stables, are purely Hindu in style, and show that the Mohammedans must have bodily lifted the material from some Hindu building of earlier date. In fact, throughout Mandu remains of workmanship, obviously Hindu, are in evidence. In some respects the 'Jehaz Mahal' or 'Ship Palace' has one of the most attractive positions on a ridge between two lakes, which must have made it a delightful residence. In front and rear an expanse of water to cool the summer breezes and a magnificent view of the city from Songarn and the great mosque right away to Rup Mati's Chhatri are among the pleasing features of this palace, the building of which is attributed to Ghiyas-Din-Khilji. Legend relates that this king maintained an Amazon guard of five hundred fair Turkish women and five hundred black Abyssinian women ; and, however this may have been, a building near the Jahaz Mahal is still called the guard-house of the Amazon Guard.

The Lal Koti is a pleasantly situated building at some distance from those described above. Apart from its attractiveness it is interesting as being probably the house in which Sir Thomas Roe lived during his stay at Mandu. In this and other edifices the remains of paintings on walls and roof are to be seen, some of very pleasing design, and in many of the buildings, some, at least, of the beautiful blue

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ornamental tiles with which they were decorated remain. In these days little big-game is to be found round Mandu; what there is consists of a few leopards, pigs, and perhaps an occasional barking deer or gazelle upon the lower slopes of the hills.

But in the early years of the nineteenth century it is stated that native horse soldiers riding through this district were often dragged from their saddles by tigers. Lions, too, were once common in this and other parts of Central India, and our Ambassador mentions that on one occasion he obtained leave to shoot one which came round his house, adding that they were considered strictly royal game. When they disappeared from Mandu is unknown, but they still existed in small numbers in Central India, round Gwalior, up to about 1880.

It needs but little imagination to conjure up a picture of the great fortress as it was in days of yore, the *muezzin's* call from the great mosque, ringing clear through the pure air of early dawn or softened by the heavy dust-laden atmosphere of departing day, the cry of the watchman upon the wall, the tramp of war steed and man-at-arms, the laughter and revelry of banquet and festival, the shriek of erring slave condemned to the elephants, the private apartments of an eastern palace where women wailed and others laughed and many a merry monarch 'gloried and drank deep.' Much as a visit to Mandu may mean even unto him who can see only the present, surely a hundred times greater will be the pleasure of him who hath the gift of imagination to conjure up the past.

Archæological research in the arid valley of the Indus has thrown light upon many pages of Indian history which hitherto have been dark. Mohenjo-Daro ('Place of the Dead') has been excavated, and already the story of ancient India has been

pushed back some thirteen centuries as a result of the finds made there.

Here have been discovered remains of the chalcolithic age, a period when people built cities of well-burnt brick, laid in mud mortar, when stone implements were being discarded for those made of metal. In the kitchens of Mohenjo-Daro both flint and copper tools have been found, which places the civilization in this transitory period.

A great number of seals have also been unearthed, which bear written characters of a language at present undecipherable. The end of the neolithic period in India therefore coincided with a highly developed civilization, and the 'dark people' of whom the Aryan conquerors spoke many centuries later were more advanced than their new masters.

Before excavation was taken in hand, Mohenjo-Daro was a group of shrub-covered mounds, the highest of which was surmounted by the ruins of a Buddhist Stupa. Little remained of this stupa, and it had no pretensions to beauty or noble proportions, but the burnt bricks used in its building gave a clue to the buried remains of a city whence they were taken. This bore out the legend of a 'City of the Dead,' which local rumour placed in the vicinity and determined the Archæological Survey of India to make a close investigation.

A cut, 25 feet deep, in the courtyard of the stupa, revealed layer upon layer of masonry of varying age, showing that the mounds were formed by successive periods of building houses one on top of another, as the older ones fell into decay.

The uppermost layer was naturally the most modern, and from the evidence of seals, which unmistakably came from Mohenjo-Daro, being found in buildings of known date in Babylonia and Elam, it can definitely be said that the uppermost stratum of the city was built at about 2750 B.C. ;

i.e. at about the time of Sargon of Arade. The city seems to have been abandoned soon after that period, but at present no explanation for this has been found.

Although there are several levels of varying age, the excavations so far have mostly revealed buildings of the uppermost city only, with occasional descents into the period before. But unfortunately it is feared that the oldest buildings will never be excavated ; because the whole level of the Indus Valley and of the Indus itself has risen in the course of the many centuries since they were built and these buildings must now be below the water-level in the soil.

Of the buildings disclosed the most striking lie in what may have been a priestly quarter. Here a massive building was found, with a great tank of 39 feet long by 23 feet wide in the centre of it. The whole structure is very massive, and the tank, carefully built, with the bricks of its floor laid on edge and the walls rubbed down smooth. Steps led down to the water at each end, and in the eastern wall traces of a damp-proof course of bitumen are still to be seen, an extraordinary elaboration in a building five thousand years old.

The tank was emptied by a well-built drain with brick on edge floor, and corbelled roof. A man-hole in the roof gave access for periodical cleaning. It is assumed that the tank was used for bathing in connection with the ritual of the prevailing religion, rather than as a receptacle for sacred fish or crocodiles, because the many bathrooms found in the city show that the inhabitants were much given to cleanliness.

Between the tank and the *stupa* is a block of buildings between two parallel streets, and to the south of the *stupa* are similar buildings separated into blocks by narrow lanes. The feature of the city, outside the houses, is the wonderful drainage system that obtained. Under every street and lane



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ran well-built drains, receiving tributaries from the houses on either side. It appears that the main drains ran into large soakage pits, which were periodically cleared out of mud, and therefore just stopped short of perfection, for there is no evidence that the drainage system extended beyond the limits of the city.

A feature of every house is the bathroom, and these again were emptied into the street drains. From a study of the gutters and pipes running down the sides of every house it would seem that Mohenjodaro was the centre of a heavy rainfall, and a great change must have come over the district since those days. The supply of timber was also abundant, for every house shows the marks where wooden beams were used to support floors and roofs. In the surrounding jungle, it is assumed from the study of seals found in the city, were elephants, rhinoceroses, and tigers ; but the lion, lover of bare arid spaces, was not found. Again a remarkable change in the characteristics of the whole region.

The town was well laid out, and the streets ran straight and parallel, with smaller streets at right angles, making neat blocks of buildings as in a modern city. Most of the houses were two-storied, and some of them had outside staircases to the upper storey, suggesting that separate families occupied the same building. On the whole the city was very crowded.

Inside the houses few decorations have been found, but fragments of pottery, vases, statuary, children's toys, ornaments, and jewellery show that the people were possessed of considerable skill in the various arts these articles represent. The most remarkable finds have been the seals, to which reference has already been made. Besides the unknown language they bear each has, in bold relief, some animal or collection of animals. That

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these seals have been found also in Babylon and Elam shows that trade must have existed between the two countries.

But with all that has been discovered so far about the people who inhabited Mohenjo-Daro we are still in doubt as to what was their race, their religion, and their language. No skeletons or human remains have been discovered, nor have there been found any traces of cremation of bodies. The burial customs of these ancient inhabitants of the Indus Valley remain a mystery.

Lying off the beaten track, about thirty miles to the north-west of Lucknow, the ancient city of Kanauj is to-day but a shadow of its ancient greatness. Yet, when the Argan hordes swept down from High Asia and had established kingdoms in Central Asia, the Punjab, and in north-west Hindustan, Kanauj, on the Ganges, formed the eastern extent of their kingdom. This was as far back as 1500-1400 B.C.

Kanauj has fallen upon evil days, and from being the ancient capital of one of the oldest kingdoms of Hindustan is but a place of pilgrimage to-day and a town renowned for its attar (essence of roses). It lies half-way between Lucknow and Fatehgarh, and is easily accessible by motor bus and a metre-gauge train leaving Lucknow daily.

The authentic history of Kanauj begins with the visit of the Chinese traveller, Hieum Tsiang, to India about A.D. 629-645. Like his predecessors, Fah Hisum, Kieum Tsiang was an ardent Buddhist, but more observant and more highly cultured. When he visited Kanauj, on the Ganges, he found it to be the metropolis of an empire that covered Hindustan and the Punjab, and included a number of tributary Rajas. The empire stretched from Kashmir to Assam and from the Himalayas to the

Nerbudda River. Siladitya, probably the first to be known as Maharaja Adhiraja, or 'lord paramount,' was the reigning emperor. Siladitya attempted the conquest of the Deccan, but failed. He was tolerant, emperor of all religions, and while favouring Brahmanism also patronized Buddhism.

It was the Maharaja Siladitya who held the great festival at the Prayag, which is modern Allahabad. Prayag, from a very remote period, was held as a sacred place, because of the union of the two rivers, the Jumna and Ganges. Under the vast system of alms-giving, advocated by Brahmanism and Buddhism, Prayag had continued to be recognized as holy ground, and the merit of alms-giving was enhanced a thousandfold by being bestowed at Prayag ; it was in consequence called 'the field of happiness.'

Every five years the great Maharaja Siladitya distributed all the treasures of his kingdom as alms. Hieum Tsiang was present at one of these extraordinary gatherings which he described thus :

'All the Rajas of the Empire were there, together with half a million people, and all were feasted by the Maharaja for seventy-five days. Meanwhile the alms were distributed without distinction of person or religion. The whole of the accumulated treasures of the kingdom were given away to Buddhist monks, Brahman priests, heretical teachers, and mendicants of every grade and degree. The poor, the lame, the orphan received alms in like manner.'

'The Maharaja was supposed to expiate all his sins by this unlimited almsgiving. At the close of the festival Siladitya stripped himself of all his robes and jewels he had worn during the seventy-five days and distributed them among the multitude. He appeared in tattered garments like a beggar. "All my wealth," he cried, "has been

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spent in the field of happiness and I have gained an everlasting reward : I trust that in all future existences I may continue to amass riches and bestow them in alms, until I have obtained every divine faculty that a creature can desire." '

Earlier than Hieum Tsiang's visit, Kanauj had been chosen by the Emperor Harshavardhana (A.D. 605-646) as the capital of his kingdom, when he became undisputed ruler of Northern India, although at this time his father ruled at Thanrowar near Karnal. After the death of this monarch the town continued as the metropolitan town of a district by the same name, with varying fortunes. Two kingdoms, the Palas of Bengal and the Gungjaras of Rajputana desert, attempted its capture till about A.D. 835, when Bhaja I finally captured it and made it the capital of the last great Hindu empire in Northern India. The Gungjara Empire extended from the Arabian Sea to the borders of Assam, with Kanauj as capital till its final destruction in A.D. 1018 by Mahmud of Ghazni. Even after its fall Kanauj remained as a provincial capital and was decorated with new shrines in place of those destroyed.

Mahmud, in A.D. 997, succeeded to the throne of Ghazni, a small territory in Kabul. He conquered all Persia on the one side and a great part of India on the other, without removing his Court from Ghazni, in consequence of which he was known as Mahmud of Ghazni. Mahmud is said to have made twelve expeditions into Hindustan, plundering temples, breaking down idols, and carrying off immense treasure to Ghazni, as well as a multitude of slaves, male and female.

His sack of the famous shrine at Somnath, which had escaped him till a late period of his life, will give some idea of the man he was. Somnath lay a thousand miles from Ghazni, yet not too far for him,

even in his declining years, to attempt the destruction of the temple, which was reported to contain vast treasures.

There was an idol-pillar in this famous temple, the symbol of the Supreme Spirit, Siva or Mahadeva. A thousand Brahmans dwelt at Somnath to offer the daily sacrifices, and five hundred damsels were engaged in the temple to dance before the idol.

The route to Somnath lay through the desert of Scinde. Mahmud marched 30,000 horsemen through Western Rajputana to escape the burning sands. No attempt was made to oppose him: the Rajputs abandoned their cities at his approach. When, however, Mahmud reached Somnath they were assembled there in great strength to defend their god. The temple being built on a peninsula out at sea, and approached by a narrow neck of land, was strongly fortified with walls and battlements manned by Rajputans. For two days the fighting continued with great slaughter. At last the Rajputans, finding that all was lost, fled to their boats and put out to sea.

With the termination of the battle Mahmud entered the temple. It was a large gloomy building supported by fifty-six columns; the idol-pillar was in an inner chamber. The Brahmans implored Mahmud to spare it, offering to pay an enormous ransom. The answer they received was: 'I come to destroy idols, not to sell them,' saying which, he struck the pillar with his mace and broke it to pieces, whilst piles of diamonds and rubies, which had been hidden in the pillar, fell scattered on the floor.

Mahmud returned from Gurzerah to Ghazni with only a remnant of his army. His march was opposed by the Rajputs of Agmere, compelling him to march through the desert. His guides led him astray through sandy wastes in revenge for his destruction of Somnath, with the result that many of his soldiers

died of thirst, whilst others went mad from the burning sun. After water had at last been found the guides were put to death.

Mahmud died in A.D. 1030, aged sixty years. For a century and a half after his death the annals, while mentioning the wars and revolutions in Central Asia, are silent regarding India. His dynasty was driven out of Ghazni by the Afghans under Muhammed Ghori, who became lord of Kabul and Punjab.

Muhammed Ghori resolved on the conquest of India. In 1911 he marched an army against the Raja of Delhi, but found himself surrounded by the enemy and had a narrow escape with his life. But the Rajput dominion was weakened by feuds. There was a feud between Delhi and Kanauj, which soon cleared a way into Hindustan for the Afghans.

The Maharaja of Kanauj claimed to be a lord paramount amongst the Rajputs. He gave a great feast, to which he summoned all the Rajas of Hindustan to appear as his vassals and play their parts as servants in his household. At the same time he celebrated the 'Swayambara,' or 'maiden's choice' of his daughter.

The Raja of Delhi loved the daughter of the Maharaja of Kanauj, but he scorned to serve as a door-keeper at the feast and refused to come. The Maharaja was wroth at the affront and ordered an image to be made of the Raja of Delhi and placed it at the door of the hall. The feast was held and the Swayambara was begun. The princess entered the hall with the marriage garland in her hand. She threw one look at the assembly and then, turning to the door, cast the garland round the neck of the image of the Delhi Raja. The whole assembly was in commotion. Before a man could speak the Raja of Delhi appeared in the hall and led away the princess. In another moment he had galloped off with his bride along the road to Delhi.

The Maharaja of Kanauj brought the Afghans down upon his son-in-law. He invited Muhammed Ghorî to march his army to Delhi, and the Afghan horsemen were soon on their way to the famous city. The Raja of Delhi heard that his enemy had again taken the field ; he took no heed, for he cared only for his bride. At last the Mohammedans were thundering at his gates. Pulling on his mail, the Raja went out against them, but it was too late. He perished, sword in hand, and his widow burned herself upon his funeral pyre.

The Maharaja of Kanauj soon had cause to rue his treachery ; he shared the fate of his son-in-law. In 1094 he was defeated by Muhammed Ghorî and he and his army driven into the Ganges. His remains were known by his *false teeth*, which were fastened by golden wire ; the relic of an age of Rajput civilization which has passed away.

From 1070 Kanauj had once more grown to be a magnificent city under Chandradeva and Gavindahandra of the Gaharwar dynasty, and remained independent under her Hindu kings for more than a quarter of a century. The spoliation of the buildings of the ancient seat began under the Mohammedan Sultans of Delhi, but when the United Provinces became an independent kingdom under the Shargî Sultans of Jannpur, the buildings of Kanauj were demolished to decorate their capital. And to-day in the Mussulman buildings of Jannpur will be found pillars and capitals and many other pieces of Hindu architecture, many containing Sanskrit inscriptions of the Hindu kings of Kanauj.

Broken images and fragments are all that remain of Hindu Kanauj to-day. The site for the city was well chosen on the islands formed by the numerous old beds and channels of the Ganges. One of these channels still separates modern Kanauj from the sacred stream.

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On the sloping banks of the Ganges stand a number of tombs and mosques. Two red sandstone tombs are reminiscent of the Shargi domination in the United Province. The Jumna Musjid has no architectural merit and is an irregular pile of stonework.

The remains of the original city are to be found on the ghats of the Kalindi and the Ganges. A mile from the fort is a ruined ghat, deeply sunk in the sands of the Kalindi River, which has receded far away, leaving this ghat in a cultivated field. The magnificent temple which once stood here was demolished to build the tombs of Naga Sanyasis, on one of which a beautiful pillar of the ninth or tenth century finds a resting-place.

Around is decay and ruin and vandalized shrines; the temple of Phulmati, in the heart of the city, a modern shrine, is but a store-house for the many images of ancient Kanauj which still have many devotees. The images are mixed, being of both Hindu and Jaina origin. The beautiful tenth-century Jaina image found among the ruins in almost perfect condition has been set up and adored as Siva. The large banyan tree in the temple compound throws its shade on the heaped-up fragments of a hundred and more images, gathered when this temple was built in the peaceful period of the British Raj. The image in the Phulmatic temple worshipped as Davi Phulmati is a Jaina image, the parents of the last patriarch or Tirthankara who lived in the sixth century B.C.

Beautiful carvings and fragments of Hindu gods lie scattered in ancient Kanauj, and are to be found in the basements of houses, mosques, and temples. These latter are fragments of the earliest embellishments of the oldest shrines of Kanauj before its destruction by Mahmud of Ghazni A.D. 1018.

Besieged, sacked, and demolished, the ancient



city has still great attraction for those interested in the mysterious history of India.

The village of Pabna, at the time of its creation into a district, stood, as the town does now, on the north bank of Ichhamati River, which was then one of the important waterways of the newly-formed district, and, with many others, intersected the district in all directions. Most of these rivers have now silted up and ceased to function, and their waters are now confined by huge chars or sand-banks and afford a very precarious livelihood to those who still ply their crafts on their much-reduced waters.

Although only the second largest town in the district, Pabna is yet the headquarters of a charge comprising 1670 square miles, but one of the smallest districts in Bengal. Situated in the Gangetic delta, it is hemmed in on the east by the mighty Brahmaputra, on the south by the Ganges River, called the Padma, on the north by the district of Bogra, and on the west by the well-cultivated plains of the Rajshahai district. Bounded on the east and south by the largest rivers in India, into which the intersecting rivers discharge their waters, the whole district is practically under water during the monsoon rains and one of the most fertile on account of the rich alluvial silt brought in and taken out by the rivers ; but these selfsame rivers, after the monsoon rains are over and their mouths become closed with sand-banks, from the end of the monsoons to the beginning of the monsoons the following year, form huge inland seas or lakes, giving the district the appearance of a large fen country very much resembling the fens of the county of Cambridgeshire. The largest of these land-locked rivers is the expanse of water known as the Chalan Bil.

This great sheet of water, which in the monsoon

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rains covers an area of 142 square miles, diminishes in the cold-weather months to about 33 square miles. It is said to have formerly extended over an area of 421 miles, but owing to the incursion of silt-laden water brought in by the Ganges and by the Baral River, forming the outlet of the Bil, nearly the whole of this wide area of water has now become dry land.

Formerly, the neighbourhood of this huge inland lake was populous and prosperous, to judge by the number of temples, tanks, and buildings still standing. Hundial was a village of sufficient importance to be chosen as the seat of a commercial residency of the East India Company; Samaj, where there are many old tanks, is said to have been a cutcherry of the Nawabs of Bengal, and Murich-uran, their garrison. Many Hindu shrines are still to be found in the village of Astamanisha, while at Kola Guakhara and at Sarara are pointed out the sites of those ancient seats of Sanskrit learning known as *tols*. The country, however, declined and the population dwindled owing to fluvial changes which affected both the health and commerce of the neighbourhood more than a century ago, but since much has been reclaimed and re-peopled, and the fen country has now become a great mart for jute and other country produce, especially cold-weather crops.

The principal feeder of this vast sheet of water is the Atrai River, and its chief outlet the Baral River, by which the water is carried out into the Brahmaputra River. The Bil is a depressed basin sunk on all sides below the level of surrounding country except at the south-east extremity, where its waters escape into the Baral through the Gumani River. When the Brahmaputra is in flood the waters of the Baral are held back, and the waters of the Bil remain pent-up until the Brahmaputra falls again. During the dry season the greater part of the Bil dries up, leaving a water basin of about 15 square miles.

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Of the other sheets of land-locked water in the district those sufficiently large to merit attention are :

The Gajna Bil, 48 square miles ; the Bra Bil, 12 square miles ; the Sonapatil Bil, 14 square miles ; Ghugudhar Bil, 4 square miles ; the Kuralia Bil, 18 square miles ; the Chiral Bil, 8 square miles ; the Dikshi Bil, 15 square miles ; and the Gurka Bil, 8 square miles.

With reference to the P.W.D. investigations made about thirty-five years ago, it was found that even in the reduced area actually only 33 square miles are under water all the year round ; the rest is under water for the greater part of the year, but where the ground is rising in level every year with the deposition of silt, 49 square miles were low land, which could be cultivated during February, March, and April, while 22 square miles were raised land, which could only be utilized for cold-weather crops from January or February, and 38 square miles were cultivatable from November.

The investigations also proved that  $222\frac{1}{2}$  million cubic feet of silt every year were brought in by the feeder rivers, while 53 million cubic feet of silt were carried out by the rivers draining the Bil ; the balance of  $169\frac{1}{2}$  million cubic feet were deposited yearly ; this deposit, if distributed equally over the whole 142 square miles, would mean a raising of the level of half an inch per year.

This conclusively proves that the Chalan Bil is silting up rapidly. Land so formed is rapidly reclaimed and new villages are yearly springing up along the sides, and already the watery waste is yielding to settled tilth.

Before the great flood of 1787, the waters of the Tista River, the great Himalayan stream entering the plains of Bengal, were brought into the Atrai River which feeds the Bil, by the sacred Karotya, as shown in Van den Brouck's map of 1660. But since the

great flooding of the districts, the main stream of the Tista broke away to the east and now enters the Brahmaputra River at Tisamukh, leaving its old waterways, the Karotya and the Phuljhar, to silt up gradually.

Being a fen country, the district is well supplied with game birds of a great variety, offering most excellent shooting nearly all the year round, while its fisheries form the greatest source of supply for Western Bengal and Calcutta.

A very old form of sport still indulged in by the villagers of the fens is polo fishing, the polo being a round conical-shaped basket with a small opening at the top to enable the hand to be thrust through, and a larger opening at the bottom. The sport is centuries old, and even to-day, as it was in years gone by, the villagers are summoned to the fishing by the blowing of a horn which is heard at a great distance, when men, women, and children, each with a pole in hand, may be seen streaming across the wide stretches of plain to some distant Bil, which has been chosen as the venue of the sport.

Here, forming a long line, they raise their poles at a given signal and bring them down into the water, keeping perfect time ; as soon as a struggler is felt against the sides of the pole it is pressed down more firmly in the mud, a hand is thrust through the opening at the top and a shining fish is brought out and put into a basket carried on the back or at the side. Soon the clear water of some shallow Bil is churned into a muddy consistency. Up and down goes the long line until the blowing of the horn announces the end of the sport, by which time the Bil has been so thoroughly fished that not a fish, even of the smallest size, is to be found.

Archæologically, the most interesting building in Pabna is a Hindu shrine called Jorbungala to the north. The name is due to the shape of the shrine,

which resembles two houses joined together. It is built entirely of brick and must have been well embellished with fine brick carving in front. It now stands silently, vandalized and forsaken, amidst heavy jungle undergrowth, which prevents it being visible from the roadway. It once had a high plinth reached by a flight of steps, but during the great earthquake of 1897 it sank, and now only two feet of the plinth remain above ground.

Legend has it that the old shrine was built by one, Brajamshum Krori, a teshildar of the Moghul Nawabs of Bengal. He was a millionaire, as his name implies, and is said to have acquired his wealth at the expense of the Nawab.

Having fallen in arrears with his remittance to the Nawab's treasury, a detachment of soldiers was sent to Pabna to arrest him. Krori, on hearing of their approach, threw his ill-gotten wealth into a tank at the back and, rather than face dishonour, drowned himself and his family with it.

Besides the great number of Mohammedans, there are many sects of Hinduism in the district, the larger number being the fisherfolk, amongst whom are toiling the missionaries of the Australian and Tasmanian Baptist Missions with little success.

Among the fisherfolk castes is one known as the Sambhu-Chandi. . . . This is a sect of Hindus named after its founder, who lived about a century ago. He was a fisherman who became the favourite disciple of a Vashnava whom he had ferried across the River Ichhamati, and from whom he received superhuman powers and established the sect whose cardinal principle is Guru Satya, i.e. the Guru is Truth. They worship Radha and Kirshna and have a *math* or shrine in the village of Chitolia, with a hereditary *mahunt* or high priest, who has a large following in the district of Rangpur and also in Assam.

Among the many flourishing industries in the

district that of sugar manufactured entirely from the juice of the date palms that dot the plains is the most interesting. This sugar is known all over Bengal as *patali*. The juice taken off the first day is known as *jiran ras*, the second day's taking, the *jharna*; these juices when mixed together are boiled to the same thickness as sugar-cane *gur* and is sold as *patali*. A date tree yields, on an average, five *seers* of juice per day, or 300 *seers* during the season; ten *seers* of juice go to manufacture a *seer* of *patali*; so the output of a single date tree works out to thirty *seers* of manufactured *patali*.

Among spices, tumeric plays a large part in the produce of the fields and its manufacture goes through quite an interesting process. It is extensively grown under the shade of mango groves as well as in the open. The bulbs are placed in rows in the month of May, care being taken to keep the fields free from water as waterlogging is most injurious to the plant. The rhizomes are taken out of the soil from December to January, when the leaves are found to have withered. They are then boiled in water mixed with cow-dung and are then placed in the sun to dry. Drying takes from three to four days, after which the rhizomes are rubbed with the hands to make them clean and smooth. The crop now becomes marketable. The output is about eighty mounds of raw tumeric or twenty mounds of dry tumeric per acre, and the cost of cultivation averages about Rs. 50 per acre.

The most important cottage industry, and one that has come down through the centuries, is cloth-weaving, which has attained a high repute; it is claimed for the Pabna woven cloths that they compare favourably with the products of historical seats of the industry.

Basket-making, owing to the large exports of fish from the district, is a very lucrative cottage industry,

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and blanket-making is confined to the shepherds of Bihar who, with the large flocks, settle on the grass-covered *chars* annually and remain throughout the dry months of the year.

Like Mushidabad, Pabna is also famous for its pearl fisheries. The industry is a small one and interesting because of its rarity. Fishing for pearls commences about the middle of February, the pearls being obtained from the fresh-water shells to be found in the numerous *bils*. They are of sufficient size to command a price of Rs. 60 each, and are eagerly bought up by Bogra and Calcutta buyers.

Multan is a town of antiquity, sacred to both Hindus and Mohammedans. It is situated four miles east of the Chenab and 208 miles south-west of Lahore, the capital of the Punjab. The River Ravi once flowed by the city, but has since changed its course towards the north.

The city was formerly fortified by a thick brick wall, 20 feet high, built in 1627 by Prince Murad, son of Emperor Shah Jehan. It has now fallen down in many places. Multan has always been a great trading centre, and even to-day a brisk trade is carried on in Daryai silk, carpets, pottery, and other local products.

The origin of Multan is traced by Hindus to Raja Hiranya Kashyap, but at the time of the expedition of Alexander the Great it was peopled by the Malli tribe, after whom it came to be known as Mallisthan.

Raja Hiranya Kashyap practised severe austerities and the God Brahma, the Creator of the Universe, being pleased with him, granted him a boon of immortality. The boon turned his head and he began to think that he was God Incarnate. He issued strict orders that none should be worshipped except himself and punished defaulters vigorously.

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Behold ! The ways of the Almighty are incomprehensible to human beings. A son named Prahlad was born to the Raja. He refused to worship him from his very childhood. Prahlad had a firm belief in God and never ceased reciting His name. On this, the Raja put Prahlad through various ordeals, but Prahlad emerged unscathed from them all. The Raja, at last, lost his patience. Summoning Prahlad, he questioned on the presence of God in the iron pillar in front of him. Prahlad replied that God was omnipresent. Lo ! The Raja perceived a shadow of a person on the iron pillar and struck it. No sooner did he strike the pillar than it burst into two with an awful crash, and God appeared in the form of half-lion and half-man (Narsh singha) and tore open Raja Hiranya Kashyap's stomach with the nails of his fingers.

To commemorate this incident a temple was built later on the spot and dedicated to Prahlad. It stands towards the south of the old fort. Every year a fair is held in the month of Jaith (May) which is attended by devotees from far and wide. The devotees prostrate themselves before the idol, behind which rises a lofty iron pillar, and circumvent the enclosure with pious reverence.

Another temple, Narsinghpur, situated in the grain market, was built by Bawa Ram Das for the convenience of the citizens living inside the city.

A place of great antiquity, directly associated with the ancient worship of the Sun God, is the tank of 'Suraj Kund,' or the pool of the sun. Great interest attaches to this place as the British troops under Lieutenants Edwardes and Lake took the offensive against Mul Raj here during the siege of Multan in 1848. It is about five miles to the south of the town and is a place of great sanctity to the Hindus. The tank is about 132 feet in diameter and 10 feet deep when full. Sawan Mall surrounded



it with an octagonal wall. It is a place of pilgrimage, and two fairs are held on the site annually—one on the seventh of the waning moon of Bhadon (August), and the other on the seventh of the waning moon of Magh (February)—the numbers having apparently reference to the seven signs of the zodiac or the seven *rishis*—the sons of Manu.

Votaries now flock to it from all parts at particular seasons of the year, and it is believed that bathing in its sacred waters, besides ensuring emancipation, has the quality of healing sores and ulcers and conferring blessing in the present life.

Entering the city by the Bohar Gate, one finds the shrine of Sheikh Mohd Usuf Gudezi. It is a quadrangular building, about twenty feet high, decorated with enamelled or glazed tiles. The ceilings are elaborately embellished with tracery in stucco, inlaid with small convex mirrors. There is to the south a fine and chaste mosque with an Imam Bara. To the north is a small turret, in which is placed a stone with the impression of a foot on it. The Moham-medans believe that this is the impression of the foot of Ali-ul-Murtaza, the son-in-law of Mohammed, the Prophet. The Saint, who lies buried here, was born at Gurdez (Persia) in A.D. 1058 and moved to Multan in 1088. He obtained great reputation for sanctity and miracles. He died in 1136 and was buried at the spot where he used to perform his devotions.

The Rauza of Bahawal Haq is situated in the old fort towards the north-east of the city, and west of Prahlad Puri, and is visible from a great distance. Internally it is a square, above which is an octagon surrounded by a hemispherical dome. The architecture is elegant and graceful in appearance and decorated with glazed tiles. It suffered heavily during the siege of 1848, but was soon afterwards repaired by the Mohammedans.

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Bahawal Haq's fame for sanctity, piety, and learning spread throughout the country, and gained for him numerous disciples. The shrine is held in great esteem by the followers of the Saint, who number many thousands.

The shrine of Shams Tabrez stands about a quarter of a mile to the east of the old Fort on the high bank of the old bed of the River Ravi. The tomb is a square, surmounted by a semi-spherical dome and ornamented with glazed blue tiles. Shams-ud-Din was contemporary of Bahawal Haq. Both were at first on good terms, but fell out later on. It is said, once Shams-ud-Din felt hungry and wanted to roast a fish, but could not procure fire, as Bahawal Haq, who had great influence with the people, had banned him as a heretic on account of his catholic views on religion. Shams-ud-Din invoked God's blessings and lo! the Sun—his namesake—lowered in the horizon and helped him to roast the fish. Shams-ud-Din later became known as Shams-Tabrez.

## CHAPTER XV

### BOMBAY—CENTRE OF UNREST

**I**T is natural that in Indian troubles Bombay should be a centre of unrest, for it is the key city to India. In this connection it is interesting to recall words uttered as long ago as 1665 by the then Portuguese Viceroy in an appeal to his sovereign.

‘India will be lost,’ he said, ‘the day when the English are settled in Bombay.’ He was a far-sighted man, as later events proved.

About twenty languages—but chiefly Marathi and Gujarati—are commonly spoken in Bombay. Over 71 per cent of its people are Hindus and 15 per cent Mahommedans, the remainder being followers of the Christian, Zoroastrian, Jain or Jewish religions. Of the occupations in which they are engaged, by far the most important is the cotton textile industry, upon which, as will be shown later, the greatness and the wealth of Bombay have mainly been reared. But details of the kind enumerated in the census report fail to suggest the infinite variety of the crowds which are to be seen almost any hour in the bazaars. The spread of education, the increased facilities for travel, and other influences have helped to eliminate many of the traditional peculiarities of dress. There is a tendency to uninteresting uniformity ; but while much that was picturesque has disappeared, even in quite recent years, there still remains sufficient diversity, particularly of head-dress, to rivet the curious attention of the new-comer, unfamiliar with the ant-like crowds and industry of an Indian city.

In the early days of British occupation, Bombay proved to be a death-trap—‘nought but a charnel-house,’ to quote an old writer, ‘in which two monsoons were the age of a man.’ Various causes have been given for this, but it is probable that the chief among them was bad sanitation; the swampy, undrained nature of much of the island; habits of living which, when not actually dissolute as was often the case, were at the best unsuited to the East; and overcrowding within the walls of the Fort (built on ground extending roughly from near the Ballard Pier to the Museum, and from the latter up to and eventually including the site of what was to be the St. George’s Hospital). The English cemetery at Mendham’s Point became proverbial throughout the East for its unsatisfied appetite, and it was but slowly that an improvement could be effected. Three episodes, at long intervals, mark stages in that improvement. A great fire in 1803 enabled part of the crowded fort to be rebuilt; the demolition of the fort walls, in the ’sixties of the last century, still further opened up the town; and finally the appearance of bubonic plague in 1896 led to the formation of an Improvement Trust which undertook the construction of many new roads and the demolition of some of the worst of the slums which had been built in the steadily-growing city to the north of the fort. Plague spread from Bombay all over India, and in the years 1896–1927 caused 194,021 deaths in the city.

Incidentally, it may be remarked that whereas plague is feared with a peculiar dread by the layman, it has proved infinitely less disastrous to India than influenza, which, in the epidemic of 1918–19 alone, is said to have carried off between twelve and thirteen million people in India. This estimate makes the influenza mortality, a large part of which occurred in three or four months, exceed by nearly

two million the total of estimated deaths from plague in India in twenty years.

Before leaving this grim subject it may be noted (since one can hardly omit mention of the fact) that in Bombay, more than in any other part of India, the traveller is confronted with peculiar methods of disposing of the dead. The Parsis expose their dead in a *dokhma*, or tower of silence, which is generally erected on a hill; and in Bombay the towers of silence, on Malabar Hill, are among the best-known features of the city. Visitors who obtain passes from the secretary of the Parsi Panchayat are allowed into part of the grounds surrounding the five towers (the oldest of which dates from the end of the seventeenth century), but are not permitted to approach the towers themselves or to witness the last rites; they can more conveniently see a model of one of the towers in the Prince of Wales' Western India Museum.

One often meets a Parsi funeral procession in the streets. The dead body, shrouded in white, is carried on the shoulders of the bearers, and the male relatives and friends of the deceased follow, two and two in procession, on foot and all clad in white, each pair joined by a white piece of cloth—a bond which has a mystical meaning.

The tower to which the body is carried is a circular building of stone, open at the top, and from twenty to thirty feet high. Within it is a round platform two hundred feet or more in circumference, paved with stone slabs, on which the bodies of the dead are placed. Vultures, which nest in the surrounding trees, quickly strip the body of its flesh; and the bones of the skeleton, when dried, are thrown into the central pit of the tower, where they crumble to dust—rich and poor thus meeting together after death in one common level of equality. Drains leading from this pit contain charcoal and

sandstone, which purify the fluid before it enters the grounds, thus observing one of the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion that Mother Earth shall not be defiled.

‘To any other persons than Parsis’—writes their historian, Desabhai Framki Karaka—‘this mode of disposing of dead bodies, namely, by allowing vultures to devour them, seems revolting, but usage from time immemorial has not only reconciled the most sensitive Parsi to it, but has led him to think that it is the best that could be adopted under all the circumstances of the case. Cremation, doubtless, is the best of all existing methods, but according to the law of Zoroaster it is sinful to pollute fire with such an unclean thing as a dead body.’ Hindus on the other hand, burn their dead, not as a rule by the modern methods of cremation, in which the flames do not touch the body, but in a more primitive way on a pyre of wood, as may be seen in the burning-ground by the side of Queen’s Road—often with elaborate ceremonial forming but one part of a long and costly series of funeral rites.

In the history of the Empire’s communications Bombay has played an important part. Consider, for example, its part in the development of the ‘Overland Mail Service.’ Until the Suez Canal was built the commercial superiority of the route round the Cape of Good Hope for ships carrying cargo was incontestable ; but before the end of the eighteenth century a courier service between Bombay and England via Egypt had been established, the first voyage of English ships from Bombay straight to Suez taking place in 1773. Overland despatches were sent regularly through Egypt during the war with France, the time occupied in transit being about three months. The monthly overland mail—established by the perseverance and foresight of Waghorn—did not come until 1838. The mail was

carried by the steamers of the Indian Navy between Bombay and Suez, and vans were used in crossing the desert to Cairo. This monthly service was carried on by the Indian Navy till 1855, when it was said to have reached 'a state of inefficiency and disorganization calling loudly for reform,' and when, to the relief of travellers, with whom these ships were most unpopular, and of the officers of the Indian Navy, who disliked having passengers on board, the Peninsular and Oriental Company entered into a contract for the carriage of the mails between Bombay and London once a month with their Calcutta and Mediterranean Service.

The agitation for an effective weekly mail service was begun in 1857; but it was not until 1868 that it was determined to make Bombay the port of arrival and departure for all the English mails. In the following year Bombay still further gained in importance, for the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 did much to bring more trade to the port which rapidly became one of the largest in the world. The harbour is very capacious, being about ten miles long from north to south, with a general width of four to six miles. It was this great sheet of deep, sheltered water which led, in the seventeenth century, to the fanciful derivation of the word Bombay from the Portuguese words meaning Good Bay—a derivation, incidentally, which still appeals to the many yachtsmen who sail on its waters during the winter months. It is more scientifically derived from Mumba, the patron goddess of the pre-Christian Kolis, the earliest inhabitants of the island. And it was the natural potentialities of the harbour which most attracted the Portuguese and the early English settlers.

Bombay, having taken a pioneer part in the development of more rapid communications with England, was equally in advance of other cities in

India in introducing railways. The first section of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway—from Bombay to Thana, twenty-one miles—was opened to traffic in 1854 and was the first railway in India. The two main lines of that company were speedily extended and the incalculable benefits they conferred upon the country led to the projection of several other railways.

The construction of the Bombay, Baroda, and Central India Railway Company was begun in 1856, the first section being opened in 1860. In both these railways the suburban sections were electrified, and here again Bombay led the way to the rest of India, for the electrification on the G.I.P. Railway, which was inaugurated in 1925, was the first undertaking of its kind in the country.

The wealth of Bombay is largely founded on cotton which comes to it chiefly from Gujarat and the Deccan. During the eighteenth century the most important articles exported from Bombay were 'Surat goods' (cotton, piece-goods), pepper grown on the Malabar coast, and 'cotton wool.' The trade grew rapidly in the nineteenth century, being, during the first half, chiefly with Asiatic countries, particularly China, and the United Kingdom. The establishment of the first cotton mill in Bombay in 1851 was destined to alter the whole industrial aspect of the island, for during the latter part of the nineteenth century the mill industry became pre-eminent. The capital put into the mills came in the early days largely from the profits of the opium trade with China and from the great booms of the 'sixties. Between 1861 and 1865 occurred an enormous increase in the cotton trade which was brought about by the outbreak of the Civil War in America.

The supply of American cotton being suddenly cut off, Lancashire turned eagerly to Bombay for her cotton, and poured into the pockets of the mercantile community about eighty-one millions



sterling over and above the former price for their cotton. An unexampled exportation of cotton continued as long as the war was carried on. 'Financial associations,' as Sir Richard Temple, a former Governor of Bombay wrote, 'sprang up like mushrooms ; companies expanded with an inflation as that of bubbles ; projects blossomed only to decay.' Suddenly, when commercial delirium was at its height, the American war ended. The price of Bombay cotton at once fell fast, and the whole elaborate edifice of speculation toppled down like a house of cards. Nevertheless, the commercial stability of the city suffered no permanent damage, and modern Bombay was literally built up and established during those years.

The wealth of the speculators of the early 'sixties was sunk in the engineering and reclamation schemes. It was they who presented Bombay with some of her finest buildings. The Government aided private enterprise in the task of beautifying and improving the island, room being made for many improvements by the demolition of the old fort walls. The rapid growth of Bombay into a great industrial city led to many unforeseen results. The influx of a great mass of labourers from the neighbouring agricultural districts resulted in overcrowding and insanitary and congested quarters of the town, and it was to cope with those conditions that the Improvement Trust and, subsequently, the Development Directorate were established. Much still remains to be done to improve the housing of the poor in Bombay and to reduce the death-rate—particularly the infantile mortality.

There are few buildings of great antiquity in the city, the most historic—with the exception of a fragment of the old fort—being St. Thomas' Cathedral, the foundations of which were laid by Governor Aungier's directions, but which was not



NATIVE OF NORTHERN DIA



A FULL-TIME ASCETIC STAND-  
ING IN FRONT OF TEMPORARY  
DEVOTEES



opened until about forty years later in 1718. An attempt to rebuild it was made in 1863, but was brought to a close owing to financial trouble. It contains some memorials of considerable artistic and historic interest.

Not far from the Cathedral is the Town Hall, which was built early in the nineteenth century, partly from the proceeds of a lottery. It and the adjoining Mint, and the Byculla Club, which is about a hundred years old, illustrate very well the spacious classical style of architecture which formerly distinguished Bombay; but to-day few of the old bungalows, which were formerly numerous, survive, having either been rebuilt or pulled down to make room for the expanding city with its modern flats and streets.

The neighbourhood of Bombay is rich in temples, some of them very majestic and awe-inspiring, so that they compel one to ask why the vast labour of cutting them was undertaken. Mr. Henry Cousens suggests in *The Architectural Antiquities of Western India* that perhaps the predilection for cutting temples in the rock is to be found in the great desire for lasting merit, and the solid rock offers a better opportunity in that respect than would a structural edifice—the merit gained by the act would remain as long as the work. However that may be, and the explanation seems plausible enough, these rock-temples with the accompanying monasteries or nunneries are to be found in many places in the great range of hills known as the Western Ghats, and further inland at places like Nasik, Ajanta, and Ellora. In these sequestered retreats Buddhist and Hindu priests 'could devote themselves to worship and religious contemplation, and here they fashioned, in the bowels of the mountain, columned temples and halls, finished, to the minutest detail and ornament, with the utmost care. With wild beasts

prowling around, they chanted their evening services, and then barred and bolted themselves in for the night. It must not be imagined that the cave-cutters chose natural caverns to facilitate them to their requirements ; a natural cavern means rotten rock, where fragments may drop at any time, and so make living within them very dangerous. They rather selected cliffs where the rock was solid and free from cracks and fissures, and the commencement of a cave, subsequently abandoned on account of hidden flaws showing themselves, may still be seen. The driving in of the shafts was all carried out by manual labour, no such thing as blasting helped them, nor would it have been allowed, for it would have loosened the rock overhead and have made it unsafe.'

Of these caves the nearest to Bombay and among the most justly famous in all India are those of Elephanta, a small island in the harbour, about six miles from the Apollo Bunder and easily reached in a motor launch. They are by no means the earliest known specimens, for they were probably excavated about the middle of the eighth century ; but they contain much that is impressive, notably the great central hall enclosed by a colonnade and the colossal three-headed busts representing Siva, the leading character in all the sculptured groups in these caves. Here in the three-headed sculpture is Siva in the character of Brahma, the creator ; and, on the left of the spectator, Siva, in the character of Rudra, the destroyer ; and, on the spectator's right, Siva, in the character of Vishnu, the preserver. Elsewhere in the cave are various aspects of Siva and his wife Parvati, and a shrine containing a *linga* or cylindrical stone.

There are 109 Buddhist caves at Kanheri, some of which date from the end of the second century A.D. More famous, however, is the great *chaitya* or cathedral cave at Karli, between Bombay and Poona

on the old line of communication between Kinkan and the Deccan. The great cave here, which is thought to date from before the Christian era, resembles an early Christian church, its dimensions being similar to those of the choir of Norwich Cathedral. It contains a cave, 45 feet high, with a vaulted roof supported on two rows of columns which continue round, and meet behind, the *dagoba*, which is a representation of a burial mound, built in this case over the Buddha's ashes. In the early Buddhist caves the *dagoba* was the only object of worship, for the image of the Buddha was not introduced until a later date. Not the least of its attractions is its profuse display of figure sculptures and other ornaments.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SECRETS OF THE FAKIRS

ONE of the most amazing sides of Secret India is undoubtedly formed by the tricks and 'magic' of the *fakirs*. How much is genuine and how much fake is very hard to distinguish.

One of the best-known tricks of the *fakir*, after the famous 'rope trick,' which is dealt with later, is that in which a man lies naked on a bed of sharp nails. It would seem that this was indeed a horrible performance, yet it has been said that anybody could perform the trick if properly schooled for it.

Now, if you or I were placed on a bed of nails we should contract our muscles, with the result that the nails would pierce wherever they touched the flesh. The *fakir*, however, relaxes, and is so skilful that he puts so little weight on the nails that they do not enter his body. Of course, this may take many years to learn, and no doubt the pupil gets badly damaged in the process. The principle, however, is very much the same as that of a drunken man falling from a height and not hurting himself, for the simple reason that he crashes an inert mass. A sober person would automatically stiffen and throw out his arms, probably breaking his limbs.

The details of the secret have never been learned by white men, but Indian Army doctors are aware that certain *fakirs* can be buried alive for long periods without harm. These medical men have found, on examination of the resurrected patients, that they are in a state of cataleptic trance during the

## SECRETS OF THE FAKIRS

time that they are in the coffin. Such cases are not strange to Europe, where people have been known to sleep, as if dead, for weeks at a time.

The *fakir*, however, has learned the secret of going into a trance at will, and of setting a time limit to his period of catalepsy. Certain European occultists have also perfected this art and have remained in the trance state for days, during which time they have, to all intents and purposes, been dead. The late Mr. Harry Houdini was possessed of this strange power, which enabled him actually to be in an air-tight box for hours at a time.

One of the *fakirs'* best-known 'turns' is the sword trick. A woman is placed in a wicker basket, bound hand and foot, and half a dozen keen-edged swords are thrust through it. European spectators have been known to faint as the terrible weapons pierce the wicker, imagining that they pass through the woman's body. But a few minutes later the swords are withdrawn, and the woman emerges unscathed, beaming on the crowd and accepting their silver offerings.

The details of this trick are quite simple, but a considerable knowledge of anatomy is needed before it can be performed successfully. For years, perhaps, the *fakir* has practised with the same woman, and knows exactly where she will be in the basket. His swords are so directed that they pass between the woman's side and arms, between her legs and fingers and across the body without touching it. The swords are thrust in at an angle so that the crowd around get the optical illusion that they are going straight down and into the woman's body.

*Fakirs* will not attempt the trick with any but their usual woman or boy assistant. They fear that the person might move, or might lie in a different position from that of the assistant accustomed to the trick.



There are, however, many *fakirs* in India whose tricks defy detectives and who are genuinely believed to possess supernatural power. A young student once astounded a distinguished audience, including medical men and members of the Viceroy's staff. This young man was buried alive, burned in a box on a huge fire, pierced with swords, and allowed a steam-roller to pass over his body. After these ordeals he showed no physical traces of wounds of any kind, and left his watchers half paralysed with amazement.

Later he admitted that it was all trickery, but defied anyone to discover the secret processes by which he manufactured his 'miracles.'

'Levitation' seems perhaps impossible to explain. How can a heavy body be lifted from the ground? But there is a trick well known to Western conjurers by which the weight of the body can apparently be increased and a slight woman make herself so heavy that four strong men cannot lift her. The trick lies in the position taken up by the woman. When she is 'normal' she takes up an ordinary standing position and is easily lifted by the four men. Then she 'increases her weight,' and, strive as they may, the men cannot move her from the ground.

The secret lies in the woman cunningly manipulating her elbows, legs, and body so that the men cannot use their arms as levers. It requires considerable knowledge of anatomy and mechanics to perform this trick, but once it is realized that the human body is only an elaborate system of levers, the rest is easy.

Often performances of the *fakirs* have been explained—walking on hot coals, for instance, can be performed by anyone 'in the know' who has applied certain chemicals to the feet. It is essential to 'keep moving,' but if this is done there is no risk of burning.

But the rope trick has not been explained, at least, not finally. . . .

Western civilization has now grown weary of querying and arguing the possibilities of the trick. Opinion ranges from the whole-hearted belief of a few men who claim to have seen it done to those who scoffingly challenge anyone to come forward and settle the question once and for all before a representative audience.

The trick is done by using a long coil of rope. This rope is thrown into the air by the conjurer and it remains suspended in the air, although there is apparently nothing on which it could be hung or held up. Then the magician's accomplice, generally a small boy, climbs up the rope and disappears. Some versions of the story say that a few minutes after this disappearance parts of the boy's body fall from space, first a leg, then an arm, then his head. When all the parts have fallen they suddenly take shape and the boy once again appears before them, absolutely whole and without a scratch upon him.

So great an interest and controversy have centred round this trick that, from time to time, handsome money offers have been made for anyone who will perform the trick in England. Offers from that high seat of necromantic learning, the Magic Circle, have attracted the attention of many magicians. The president of the Circle, when offering the sum of £500, said that one might just as well offer £50,000 because the deed was impossible to accomplish.

Immediately he was answered by Dr. Cannon, the psychiatrist, who approached the Circle and said that he would require the sum of £50,000 before he did the trick. That sum, he said, would be necessary for bringing over his Yogis and obtaining special sand from India. In addition he would require the Albert Hall heated to tropical temperature. The

project fell through upon the doctor's refusal to agree to pay all the expenses and return all the money if he failed to perform the trick.

It is a fact that many people either believe, or are willing to be persuaded, that the trick can really be done. Evidently the aura of deep mystery with which the enigmatic East has succeeded in surrounding itself has been the basis on which have been laid the foundations of many wondrous tales spread about the supernatural powers of the Indians. An impressionable West has absorbed stories of Yogi, hypnotism, and the like, and have led themselves to believe that the Indians are a race of people who possess a store of knowledge of matters carefully withheld from Europeans.

Major Yeats-Brown affirms that he was once in the company of a native who could, upon request, produce the perfume of any flower. As soon as he was asked the scent of the flower, immediately that scent would assail the nostrils, and would disappear only when another scent was asked for. All this the native did while squatting on the floor, and never once did he move his position.

A Bombay paper once attempted to settle all controversy by offering the sum of £750 to anyone who would give a genuine and unchallengeable performance of the rope trick before a Bombay audience. The offer came as a result of long correspondence, in which many testified to having seen the trick, though doctors maintained that the phenomenon was due to mass hypnotism, or at least to the power of suggestion.

A story, giving an illustration of this power of suggestion, is told of a certain devout Brahman who, while on his way to offer a sacrifice to the gods, met a rogue. The rogue was carrying a very emaciated and unclean mongrel. "See, O Brahman," he said, "here I have the finest pig that ever you have

seen. It would make a fitting sacrifice to the gods."

The Brahman was astonished and said that he was sure that the rogue had in his arms not a pig, but a dog, and a very poor one at that. Just then a second rogue, a confederate of the first, came up. "O Brahman, but what he has is the finest pig that ever I have seen. Surely you will buy it and earn for yourself the pleasure of the gods." The poor Brahman was dumbfounded and thought that his eyes were deceiving him.

While they were still arguing a third rogue came up, and the other two asked his opinion. Yes, it was the finest pig that ever he had seen, and would assuredly make a wonderful sacrifice for the gods. At this the Brahman was convinced that what he saw was in reality a pig, and he thereupon bought it and carried it off for a sacrifice.

Doctors would have it believed that all those who say that they have seen the rope trick have been subjected to the same kind of suggestion, only much more powerful. One man, bearing this in mind, hit upon the bright idea of taking a photograph of the act being performed. Accordingly, he roamed through India until he found a native wizard who agreed to perform the trick. Then, according to this investigator's testimony, he set up his camera and waited for the deed to be performed. He, and others with him, definitely saw, or thought they saw, the rope thrown up and stay there of its own accord; saw the boy climb up the rope; saw the boy disappear.

While the rope was supposedly in the air the camera clicked and the photograph was taken. When developed it showed the picture of the rope lying coiled at the magician's feet.

It may be said, however, that the photographer, in his excitement, might have taken the photograph at

the wrong time, or that someone, while waiting, might have accidentally jogged the camera and caused the picture to be taken. In any case the magician, having knowledge of a carefully-guarded secret, would very probably refuse to carry on with the performance until the camera had been removed, knowing that his secret would be revealed if the picture were taken.

A similar story has been told by a well-known traveller, who was convinced that the trick was purely a case of mass hypnotism. This gentleman, accompanied by a reliable friend, went to see the trick performed in Bombay and took a camera with him.

The *fakir*, accompanied by a small boy, took his place in the market square and tossed his rope into the air. It immediately straightened out, and the small boy climbed to the top of it and disappeared. Twice the watcher clicked the shutter of his camera, once when the rope was thrown, and again when the boy disappeared. An hour later the films were developed, but turned out blanks.

He was convinced that although he believed he had taken the picture, actually he had not done so, for with everyone else in the crowd he was under the hypnotic spell of the *fakir*. Hypnotism is a very advanced art in the mystic East, and the rope *fakirs* have kept the secrets of it for centuries. Small wonder that they can hoodwink people with small knowledge of the science.

A sufficient number of Europeans have seen the rope trick performed to convince us that a remarkable performance of some kind is given, but it has to be remembered that it is not done on the stage of a theatre, where tricks of lighting and scores of ingenious mechanical devices can be employed. The rope trick, as seen in the East, is always performed in the open air, without any special background, but it is significant that the performer usually arranges

the scene so that the light shines into the eyes of the audience.

This fact has been used by those who put the trick down to hypnotism as giving weight to their theory, maintaining that the strength of the sun on the eyes assists the performer in hypnotising his audience.

Truly the rope trick is so controversial a matter that no hard and fast decision can be given. Many who have seen it ridicule the idea that they were hypnotised. If they were not, it must be admitted that the Indian conjurers are past-masters of their profession and can carry out, without mechanical aids, tricks far surpassing anything ever done by conjurers of the West.

## CHAPTER XVII

### TRAILING INDIAN GANGSTERS

**T**HE home of the Indian agitator and his dupe, the gangster, is Bengal. Their minds are highly developed but warped, since, from childhood, they have been soaked in the doctrine of the uselessness and slavery of the present system and the urgent need for some other. So intensely do they yearn for a mythical freedom that the longing has become a definite racial characteristic. The one aim in life of the Bengali agitator is a transgression of the law, which he carries to any lengths.

Recent special powers granted to the police have helped considerably in the arrest of a number of known malefactors. Unfortunately, the problem of the agitator is far deeper than that. Because the fanatic who threw a bomb or used a revolver is taken, that does not mean the end of the incident, but only the beginning. Behind the man or girl who figures as a martyr is a network of plot and counterplot, and it is the men behind the scenes who must be traced. In almost every case of violence the 'executor' is a student. In countless attempts of violence the perpetrators have been this class, impressionable, under-developed youngsters who made a gesture of sacrifice for 'the cause.'

Recently, however, the police have not wasted much time on students, but concentrated upon their tutors—sinister folk who plan in the dark alleyways of Calcutta and half a hundred bazaars. For obvious

reasons the exact avenues of police information cannot be revealed, and perhaps some of them, in more ordinary circumstances, would not bear close examination. Many valuable clues are received from London. Then there are always the 'squeakers' in India who, because of some grievance, inform the police as an act of revenge. Indian C.I.D. officers also play a big part in the preliminary investigations, and almost daily take their lives in their hands to secure information that can lead to an arrest. On occasions British police officers have dressed as beggars and as lepers. Many of their most successful cases never see Press publicity, as it is only the actual attempts at assassination of which the public read. The history of more than one widespread plot that missed fire is written in the secret files of the Indian C.I.D.

In Howrah, a suburb of Calcutta, there was a case in which a number of fanatics had been known for some time, but no definite information could be obtained about their movements. Special police watched a suspected house and then it was discovered that one of the gang was a youth who had been causing great trouble at college and was completely unrestrained, also that the house was definitely the meeting-place of the political agitators. A man was seen approaching with a suspicious bundle, and two C.I.D. men at once jostled him so that he dropped it. It proved to be *atta*, or Indian flour. It was then decided to raid the house, and to allay suspicion a British officer darkened his skin with permanganate of potash and dressed in a *dhoti*. At zero hour the police made a dash and managed to penetrate the cellar of the house where several men were found. Instantly the place was a bedlam. A huge *gurrah* of water was overturned, drenching some chemical mixture, which immediately filled the place with choking fumes. In the midst of this confusion three of the plotters were dragged towards the cellar



steps, when suddenly a shot rang out, another, then a third. In the glare of the explosion the British officer leaped at the desperado, who managed to get away. But the description gained of him was so good that he was traced up country and soon arrested. He was proved to be the leader of the gang and though all his shots had gone wide his murderous intentions increased his sentence.

Tracking down gangsters is difficult enough in Bengal, but in the Punjab, where the intellectual level is considerably lower, it is apt to be doubly dangerous.

There was the case of one arch-plotter who had been spreading sedition and inciting men to violence. But whenever the police appeared he vanished in the most mysterious manner. He became so bold and started such a campaign of murder that the police estimated that he personally had killed at least five people. Then when the Indian C.I.D. were almost at their wits' end a 'squeaker' came forward to inform. He was a miserable rat of a fellow and would not say a word until he was certain of his personal safety. The British officers were very patient and 'pumped' him so effectively that they learned their quarry was lying low near Sind. Accompanied by half a dozen trusted men an officer was sent post-haste to arrest him.

Riding through a wide, sandy tract, where clouds of dust rose at every step, they reached a dilapidated hut to find the bird flown. This was in the hot weather with a shade temperature of 110 degrees, and though the party had not much water they decided to push on. The fugitive's tracks were easily followed past the usual canal colonies, and it was plain he was making south for sanctuary in the crowded bazaars of Lahore. In all the police covered a distance of 300 miles in three weeks, and found every native sullen and unwilling to give

information. The gangster seemed to have friends in every village, and must have lain concealed in scores of houses on that long hunt.

At length, when Lahore was reached, the officer and his men were hot on the fugitive's heels ; they could scarcely have been more than half an hour behind when he slipped into the city. The quarter given over to *nautch* girls is one of the most reliable information bureau of the police, and within two days the long-sought killer had been located. The informant was a tawdry chit of a girl. She led the officer to a four-storied building in a labyrinth of streets, pointed a grimy finger towards the top room, and said : " It is your turn now ! " At that moment a bullet spat from the window, wounding a passer-by, who died a few minutes later. At once a barricade was erected by the police, who opened fire on the shuttered windows, but in another minute another pedestrian took a bullet in the head.

The British officer then telephoned for assistance to the armoured-car company in the cantonment five miles away, and presently a machine-gun was pouring a hail of lead into the office. Ten minutes later the police found the murderer's dead body lying in the corner of the room riddled with bullets.

Among the teeming thousands of an Indian bazaar an agitator is difficult enough to trace ; but when he takes to disguise the difficulties of arrest are doubled. There was the interesting case of an officer in the United Provinces who was detailed to trace a man for arson and sabotage. The search led him to the railway along the banks of the Ganges, and eventually to Benares, but without success. After ten days he lost all trace of the man when a whisper came through that he might be in the vicinity of the burning ghats in some very unfamiliar role. The trouble was that the exact role was not known. The officer

strolled along the crowded streets near the river and suddenly saw a *fakir* whose face seemed vaguely familiar. It was his man ! The discovery disconcerted him, for it was as much as his life was worth to interfere with a religious mendicant. Guile had to be met with guile. At once he told one of his men to dress as a *fakir* and never lose touch with his quarry. In the intervals of telling his beads and muttering prayers he was to let drop scraps of information about police activities in an effort to scare him.

The plan succeeded excellently. The following night the decoy casually mentioned that the police had just received news of the notorious X., and the *fakir* was seen boarding a small boat near the ghats, plainly intent on a quick 'get away.' Just before the boat pulled out from the bank three men sprung on him. The police hoped to carry out the affair quietly, but the man raised such a commotion that innumerable worshippers dashed to his rescue, and in a few minutes the boat overturned, decanting a struggling throng into the muddy waters of the Ganges ! To the Hindu the river is sacred, but to an ordinary Englishman it is a cesspool infested by crocodiles. The officer who had been one of the three assailants afterwards admitted that the sight of the 'mugga' gave him the most unpleasant moment of his life. It was a case of every man for himself, and presently two dripping native police clambered up the bank, whilst a crowd of respectful worshippers gathered some distance away. The police were just about to go after the man when a shriek came from the Ganges. Thirty yards downstream floated the upturned boat and beside it the head of the gangster. There was another scream, a frothing of muddy water as half a dozen 'mugga' fought for the kill ; and then a grim silence. The head of the *fakir* had disappeared, and the river flowed on. The police had 'got their man.'

## TRAILING INDIAN GANGSTERS

The history of Indian terrorism, in Bengal at any rate, goes back to 1907. During the early years of the war it flamed up into a blaze of perverted patriotism, with twenty murders and thirty-eight outrages in a single month. In 1923 there was a similar outbreak and again in 1930 when there were thirty outrages. In 1931 nine Government officials were murdered and, what is particularly significant, the terrorists began to copy the methods and aims of Irish gunmen and Bolshevik murderers. A few years ago two new secret societies were formed. Both were formed to corrupt soldiers and officials, organize seditious schools for young students, and wage war by fair means and foul on the 'Satanic' British Government. 'Any means to the desired end' was their slogan, and the grim results of this intensive propaganda amongst half-educated youths were seen in the brutal murders that followed. Many Indian officials firmly believe that the majority of those lives might have been saved if the Government had not shown a mistaken leniency. For example, in 1919 terrorism was practically stamped out by arresting and interning known agitators. The Terrorist movement died down and, presently, the ringleaders were released. At once they recommenced their activities. The same thing happened in 1925 and a third time in 1931. In each case the too-kindly release of men sworn to smash the Government by any means within their power has resulted in a fresh crop of outrage and killing.

It was stated recently that not 3 per cent of the 320,000,000 people in India are literate; only three in every hundred can read and write. This is why at elections each candidate is given a distinguishing sign over the ballot-box—a bear, tiger, elephant, or leopard. Their ignorance, judged from the lowest Western standards, is abysmal. But it is to these folk that the trouble-makers come with

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poster, street-corner speeches, and lecture tours. They make the wildest promises, distort history in the grossest fashion, and threaten the murder of prominent Indian civilians. The pity of it is that too often those threats are carried out, with the result that the ignorant masses are duly impressed, and lend a readier ear in the future. In the East it is always the man who commands—and performs—who grips the imagination of the people. One can go too far with the principle, 'Don't make a martyr of a man.' To the Bengali, one hundred men in prison or five men who face the drop for murder is a sign of *power* before which he bows the head. Release those arrested men, and the only reward is sneers.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THOSE WHO WORK IN SECRET

**T**HE most diabolical and fiendish trade ever recorded in the annals of crime still exists in India to-day. It goes under the name of the 'Beggars' Corporation' and is owned by a band of select and wealthy citizens of India who regard the spectacle of human life, beaten, tortured, wracked with pain and gross mutilation, with the same complacency as they would a fly that they had idly flicked from their coat sleeve.

It is almost incredible what vile forms profit-making can take beneath India's outer semblance of Oriental beauty—in the secret India, mysterious, impenetrable, and inscrutable to the European.

Here we find men with the veneer of civilization torn from them, revealed in the stark reality of their greed for gain, careless of their means of attaining it. Employing a vast organization of ruthless hirelings to whom life means less than death, unscrupulous leaders carry on their infamous practices. Sometimes these hirelings are caught at their work, but those who devise the plans seldom or never are. The latter are usually prosperous and likeable members of a small town community. Yet the plans they devise in secret form one of the greatest scourges the world has ever known. They control 'rackets' which even a Spanish Inquisitor would regard as inhuman. Such a one is the 'Beggars' Corporation.'

The idea of these factories is to manufacture cripples in the most fantastic and grotesque shapes

possible, and sell them to dealers all over the country.

Indians will pay for such a sight as a holy beggar, out of superstition, and the more deformed he is the more money will be given him.

Thus to any unscrupulous mind the idea of making a trade out of these deformed wretches is self-apparent. Thus barbaric tortures are devised to render normal human beings cripples for the rest of their lives, for as they say, with the glibness and self-complacency of their kind, 'We can find no one sufficiently deformed for our trade, so we must manufacture our own.'

Shrouded under the multiplicity of India's secret ways, factories supply an unceasing flow of cripples to outside agents.

The methods are simple. First a band of Thugs, employed by the factory, sets out to capture 'raw material.'

Sometimes these Thugs wait in ambush for hours at a lonely spot by the roadside. Then, as an Indian comes by they spring out, seize him and carry him off to the waiting car. At other times, emboldened by boasting or drink, they raid some lonely village, looting, pillaging, and burning, and carry off the men to a fate from which there is no escape.

These Thugs are especially on the look-out for children. They well know that the bones of a child are far more supple and pliable than those of a grown man.

Once inside the portals of the 'Beggars' Factory,' work proceeds with the efficiency and economy only known to such an institution.

The prospective beggar is starved until he is a shadow of his former self. Kept in filth and rags, chained in some subterranean vault without the light of day, he becomes a piteous and animal-like creature.

The resistance he first showed, which was kicked, bullied, and beaten out of him, has transformed itself into a crawling, snivelling, self-pity. Solitary confinement in such a loathsome state has changed him into something unrecognizable even to his friends.

Perhaps the prisoner is a child. Then the spectacle is even more appalling.

When a prisoner has been reduced to a state of non-resistance business begins. Various ways have been devised of changing the 'raw material' into the finished article, but all of them are more barbaric than those of the torture chamber of Tippu Sultan.

Bones are broken and reset at awful angles. Heavy loads are set on frail backs for hours at a time and for days on end. The skin is lacerated, the head is cut into grim and ghastly patterns, while all the time slow and steady starvation emaciates the victims, so that the bones protrude through the brown skin.

While this work is going on, the owner of the factory sits in his city office, checking the profits accumulating from the sale of these cripples, finds out how well his own agents are doing, and rubs his hands in expectation of greater profits.

Sometimes more terrible tortures are inflicted upon these hapless creatures to produce an even more hideous-looking beggar, for the more fantastic he looks the more money will he be given. So he can be sold at a higher price. Some of these cripples have been known to fetch as much as £100. To 'manufacture' an even more lucrative product an owner once devised the scheme of cross-breeding cripples.

His course completed, the cripple either remains in the factory's employ or is sold to a chain working on beggars' profits.

So he goes forth into the world again, misshapen, grotesque, hideous. But his sufferings have not only



brought change to his body, for his mind, wracked with a thousand unceasing torturing pains, has snapped, or been transformed into something unthinking, unknowing.

So he begs at bazaars, temples, and at holy gatherings, submissive, only able to understand the dictates of his master—a pawn in the game played by India's underworld.

These practices, of course, come under the censure of the Government. But India is a large country, and it is difficult to trace criminals who have centuries of experience behind them.

There is only one weapon which can effectively combat Cripple Factories (or for that matter most of the vices that abound in India). That weapon is the Secret Service. Forbidden practices can only be exposed by an organization of law and order working in secret.

Years ago, when the menace of Thuggee was exposed and the acts of dacoits common knowledge, a department of Thuggee and Dacoity was instituted to deal with such crimes.

It was not an ordinary police force by any means, for sometimes its members had to undertake missions of the greatest danger to bring these robbers and murderers to account.

But the work was so successful that in a few years' time Thuggee was totally suppressed and Dacoity definitely on the wane.

To-day the Secret Service is incorporated with the Indian Criminal Investigation Department and the call for its special powers is much in demand.

For instance, there may be a travelling *sadhu* suspected of spreading revolutionary messages. He may be carrying information of the most vital nature to the Government. In that case, if he is not arrested straightaway, a Secret Service agent is dispatched, dressed as a *sadhu* himself, to keep a

watch on the other holy man and see just what sort of company he keeps. Maybe he will discover in what quarters to expect a sudden rising. Maybe the suspicions will be unconfirmed.

The Secret Service man may spend his time in the towns, visiting revolutionary cafés, becoming recognized in revolutionary circles, gradually working his way into the leaders' confidence, until he knows all there is to know about a seditious organization.

The Secret Service man must watch foreign *agents provocateurs* and other suspected characters. Thus in the entourage of every 'shady' foreigner who enters India, a Secret Service man takes his place, often as a cook or baggage carrier.

It can be imagined that the task of the Indian Secret Service man is one of the most dangerous in the world, and the filthiest, for he is often dressed as a native, and this necessitates his wearing the most verminous clothes.

There is one compensation for those tough members of Britain's India defence corps—that is, the abundance of real adventure. Seldom is mention made of their exploits in newspapers or books, naturally the Secret Service is shy about its escapades, but if they were ever published in complete form they would make one of the most thrilling narratives in the history of adventure.

In taking into account the work of the Secret Service it is necessary to look at India not as a land fit for the adventure-loving, but as a highly inflammable seditionist factory. Sedition is a highly-specialized art which is liable to render India a battle-ground of warring ideologists if allowed to ripen. The job of the Secret Service man is to prevent the sedition-makers from getting a hold on the Indian people, which task he performs admirably.

The courage of these men, who risk everything for

the maintenance of the *Pax Britannica*, is unbelievable. Squealers are not allowed. This corps personifies the somewhat debunked personage of the strong, silent he-men.

Its records bring it through the anarchical storm of pre-war years, through the Great War, German-Ghadr and German Islam conspiracies, through the Punjab rebellion, and on to to-day, unsullied.

When British Royalty visit India they are surrounded with pomp, with majesty, and ceremony. Gifts are showered upon them lavishly, famous subjects pay homage, and the country rises to greet the ruling house.

In such glad days, who thinks of the work that has gone before to make the ceremony a success ?

Who remembers the job of the Indian Secret Service in hounding down agitators and plotters, combing the country for rebels against law and order.

Who remembers the ceaseless days spent in the role of the humblest and most abject Indian subject who was ever cursed by a Brahman, so that an undesirable might be traced and dealt with ? Or the task of joining the savage rites of Kali worshippers, fraternizing with sadistic bomb-worshippers, hobnobbing with the vilest inhabitants of the bazaars ? Who remembers scorching days in the Punjab or the North-West Frontier Province, counter-influencing those manly peoples against the messages of obsessed seditionists ?

Only those who really know the lines of the play that is acted with curtain lowered, the tense drama named ' Secret India.'

## CHAPTER XIX

### INDIAN STUDENTS—A BURNING PROBLEM

**I**NDIAN students form one of the greatest problems to the maintenance of order to-day—and the fate of India to-morrow. With them will rest the control of the administration of future years, the destinies of millions of lives, the hopes of millions of hearts. Ultimately they will have a say in the government of India, in the way they think fit, in the way to which the knowledge they have assimilated in their youth points the direction.

Thus it is important that the Indian should have a sound, comprehensive education when he is young, away from the distorted words of extremists, an education which embraces all sides of every problem that he will be called upon to face in after life, and a warning against the false gospels of anarchism and extremism. He should be taught to weigh a situation dispassionately and justly, with neither his personal feelings nor his hot-headedness interfering with the ideals of justice.

At present, however, Indian students have little to be proud of, except perhaps extremism and fanaticism, which are fostered by the attentions of left-wing friends.

First of all we must make quite sure that there is a cause for stirring unrest among these students. Trouble is not raised for no purpose. The cause may be disguised under the pretentious but meaningless word, Nationalism, or camouflaged by the

title of Liberty, Justice, and Equality. But these are the drappings of any political movement.

Did the French Revolutionaries in 1790 really aim at setting up a state based on the laws of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity? It is doubtful. Rather it would seem that the *bourgeoisie* aimed at overthrowing the old landed aristocracy, doing away with the rigid laws that prevented a development in trade, setting up a new type of state, and making progressive steps from feudalism to capitalism.

Thus the catchwords and dogmas which impress themselves upon the ordinary man are the causes which disguise the true ends of the revolutionaries. No man will fight for the benefit of another's pocket, but he will if he hears the cry, 'religion in danger' or 'justice serving as the Government's pawn.' When he hears these cries, he thinks that one of his hallowed ideals, perhaps the cornerstone of his existence, is in danger.

The more clever the propagandist, the more followers will he attract. Religion, the controller of Indian lives, is naturally the most powerful weapon for the propagandist. But the Indian student is taught a more extensive creed, is ingrained with extremism.

Take, first of all, the case of the student being educated in India. Lord Macaulay once pondered on the problem of whether to teach Western literature or Oriental classics to higher Indian students, but the question to-day appears to be one of teaching them the pros and cons of nationalism rather than bothering about literary questions.

The case could be laid out thus :

## INDIAN INTERESTS—EXTREMISTS—TEACHING OF STUDENTS

The Indian business class, to secure a hold upon the Government of the country, must influence those

who are most likely to be its future controllers. The most likely places are the colleges, where boys go with hopes of one day attaining to the rank of politicians. Somehow or other, these colleges have to be impregnated with revolutionary creeds.

Certain teachers in the schools and colleges are ardent nationalists. They can be made to have their mission in the teaching of the young. They can be persuaded to bring home the doctrines of revolution and nationalism to their pupils, and once a footing has been made in the minds of the students, one student can influence the other. Debates can be organized, propaganda circulated, and help given to the local party. A thousand and one opportunities offer themselves.

After the extremist policies have been introduced, a so-called political consciousness will grow up in the student ranks ; there will be jeering at those who do not embrace the revolutionary creeds, sneering at those who are ' out of date ' or who ' submit to the oppressors.' The student sees his task in life as the enlightenment of the Indian masses, the furthering of a growing feeling of nationalism and, until the British Raj can finally be threatened and overthrown, the Indian State—plus the business men—set up for the benefit of the people as a whole.

Admirable intentions. Scarcely sane, however. When it comes to this ' new state,' the Indian will find that the real rulers will not be the reformers and humanitarians. The latter's doctrines will not even be used. The rulers will be the Hindu business men and the Brahmans, a very unfortunate combination indeed, for the Brahman will build up his caste doctrines again, and the business man will quickly find invaluable methods of fleecing the Indian population.

That the colleges to-day have active revolutionary sects there is no doubt. Terrorization is indulged

in to 'convert' those who either have no political 'consciousness' or have one of a different colour, something like the methods of small boys who want Oxford to win in the boat race and 'persuade' their fellows to think alike, only the treatment meted out is much rougher.

In recent years there have been a number of student strikes in India, and I will quote the *Morning Post* of September 1937 to show the disorder existing in the colleges at that time.

'One wonders whether there is any lesson to be learnt from the growing undiscipline among students of Indian colleges since the grant of provincial self-government. Hardly a day passes without reports of students' strikes or threats of strikes.

'The latest story comes from Lucknow, where 400 university students raided a cinema house, assaulted the manager and then smashed his quarters. This demonstration was said to be due to the manager's rudeness to one student who wanted to patronize the cinema.

'The premier of the United Provinces had to be sent for to pacify the crowd.

'At a College in Sind recently the girl students struck because they were discourteously treated by the men students. To complete the picture all round the men students also decided to strike.

'A general strike of students was threatened recently in the Lucknow Christian College. It was called off following an expression of regret from the teaching staff that the feelings of some of the students had been unconsciously hurt.

'Students of a college in Lahore struck in sympathy with the vice-principal. There was trouble in another college because of trivial punishment inflicted on students who insisted on bicycling in the playground.'

## INDIAN STUDENTS—A BURNING PROBLEM

Thus can be gathered the situations that arise in Indian colleges day after day. The trouble is caused by the unrest stirred up by agitators.

More dangerous situations can materialize when young and impressionable Indians have extensive doses of extremism.

Here the bomb societies come in useful. A youth is introduced to such a circle, takes the vows and attends the ceremonies. After some months of worshipping Kali, bombs and other weapons, he should be ready for anything. Accordingly he is despatched to finish the life of a British official.

One such story comes from Central India, where a society of extremists existed inside one of the colleges. It had been formed by a master there, or rather he had been an agent in forming it. The man behind him was higher up the political scale, but he influenced the other man, who in turn influenced his students.

Political activity flourished and the students became openly enthusiastic about the aims of the new movement. The religious side of the party was acknowledged by founding a bomb society of the same character as described in Chapter III. Here the more active students were encouraged to take maniacal vows, while in a state of frenzied hysteria.

One member swore to kill a certain British official. The would-be murderer was only eighteen years old, but he was convinced in his mission, utterly sure that by killing one of the oppressors of the Indian people he was doing his duty.

Information was at hand that on a certain date in the near future the official was to attend a function at a nearby town. For this purpose he would have to motor a distance of fifteen miles through wooded country. On either side of the road, dense bushes flanked the rubble, and it was here that the young



Indian was to hide, and at the critical moment throw his bomb.

When night came, the student was early in his hiding-place, listening for the purr of the approaching car. When it came in sight two side-lights made it an easy target. The car was travelling at about thirty miles an hour, and as it swept by, the young man aimed the bomb at the back seat. A deafening explosion rent the quiet of the evening. The Indian raced off as the car careered into the side of the road, the back a complete wreck and the front seat devoid of occupant.

The official had been miraculously thrown clear and was uninjured except for a bruised elbow. The sound of running feet indicated the way the would-be assassin was travelling. Without losing a moment the Englishman sped off in pursuit. His prey was running like the wind. Just when it looked as if he was going to make a clean get-away the Indian tripped, stumbled, and fell. Half-stunned, he was just rising to run once more when the official caught him. The student was given time to find more sensible ideas on life while serving a sentence in prison.

Male students are not the sole offenders in this respect. Girls are often implicated in terrorist trials and even assassination has been known. Not long ago, two girl students forced their way into a district magistrate's room, and killed him as he sat at his desk.

A dramatic story comes from Bengal, where an Indian in high authority had a son who became entangled in the meshes of extremism.

The boy had been sent to the local college for his education. While he was there he took part in the activities of a religious society which, professedly, had the most high-minded intentions, but was in reality one of the vilest revolutionary sects that ever existed.

## INDIAN STUDENTS—A BURNING PROBLEM

Many were the secret meetings carried on by the religious body, the rites of which were never revealed. Suffice it to say that the young man got so deeply implicated in this society that he was unable to escape its machinations.

At last, when he was suggested for a special task which he felt himself unable to face, he confessed everything to his father. The matter was kept quiet, but many steps were taken and much evidence given. The boy got off free, but the way out for others is not so easy.

These terrorist organizations form a deadly menace to the British in India and a depraving drag on those who are votaries of the cult, for Kali, patron of all that is worst in the Indian character, is vice goddess to these students. Once her deadly influence has cast its spell over them, once she has presided over an orgy in which they have taken part, the students find it difficult indeed to drag themselves away from those hypnotic eyes and awful hands.

Kali remains, and with her the student organizations. Wipe Kali from the face of student India, prevent the dissemination of political propaganda in the colleges, encourage games and sport, and a great step will have been taken towards a better student India.

Even then there will remain the problem of the Indian student in England.

In theory, education is a very fine thing. In practice it is not so fine. Socialists can get up on their soap-boxes, full, maybe, of good intentions and ideas, and howl in a frenzy of fury at the very utterance of the words that education is not a hundred-per-cent good thing for everybody. The answer remains the same.

Socialism, you may think, has nothing to do with Indian students in England. It has a great deal to do with them. So has inferiority complex, sex, and the

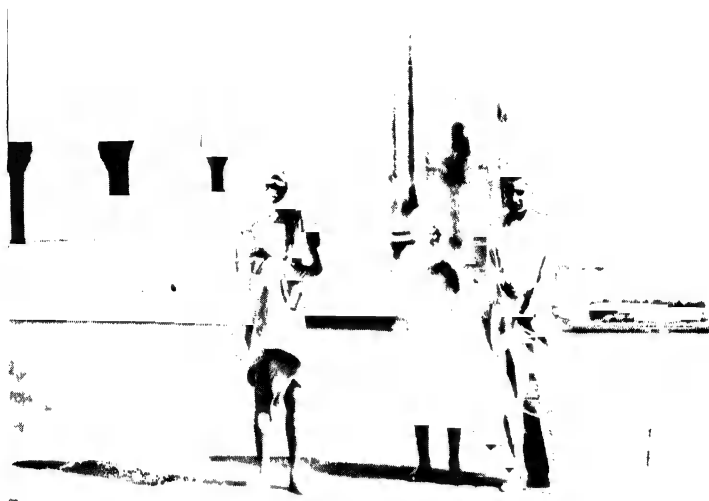
good old standby, 'east is east and west is west, and never the twain shall meet.'

When we boil it down to facts, human nature being what it is, it is hard to believe that the conquerors of lands, the Empire builders, have ever allowed education at all amongst those whom they have conquered. By usurping somebody else's property, they are, in reality, robbers. India should belong to the Indians, just as much as England should belong to the English. But if England is a robber so are all the other countries who have appropriated colonies. The Englishmen who go to India would never dream of climbing over into their neighbour's garden at home and stealing flowers, and yet they can see nothing wrong in going into another's country and stealing a lot of his wealth.

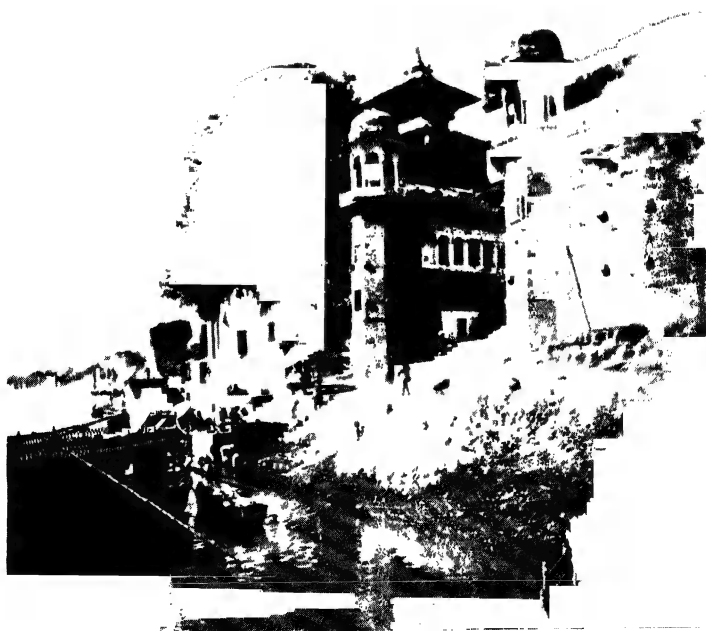
As long as conquerors look on themselves as 'tough gangsters,' and behave accordingly, life has the right perspective. But when people conquer a land and then turn round, all pie and angelic, and tell those they have conquered that stealing is wrong, and by education showing them the niceties of life, the conquerors place a most explosive bomb under their own chairs.

The building of the British Empire can be likened to a party of men playing cards. Mr. Britain gets a good hand, plays it very well and wipes up the remainder of the party. Now, says Mr. Britain, when all the chips are in his pocket, we will stop playing. But the others do not think so. Why should they allow Mr. Britain to go away with all their money and turn it into much more?

Mr. Britain is amazed and cannot understand their attitude. Peace upon earth, he says, let us all be content with our lot. But, of course, the other players are not content. They go on waiting for some nice Saturday night when Mr. Britain is a bit



A HOLY MAN, NORTH INDIA



NEPALESE TEMPLE, BENARES



## INDIAN STUDENTS—A BURNING PROBLEM

befuddled. Then they will lure him into another game and hope to win his all back, with interest. Those other players are no more content than Germany, Italy, and India are to-day.

Britain has an Empire. Therefore she must be Imperial or eventually she will lose all. In this case being Imperial means that Britain must never forget that the countries she has conquered still long for their own independence, maybe wrongly, and to their own loss. Independence to them is like the after life, sounds very nice in theory, but in reality, who knows ?

The Indian student who comes to England has a grudge against Britain, and if you talk to him he will express that grudge. Many of them make fierce accusations against Britain. They do not want the British to get out of India—not yet—but they look forward to ‘the day.’ . . .

They do not wish Britain to leave because they know that if this happened they would be out of the frying-pan into the fire, and that no sooner had the last of the British ships slipped over the horizon than another race of conquerors would pour over the border, and the new conquerors would not have the just outlook and forbearance of their predecessors. The Indian student merely says : “ Stay where you are, the day will come when we will throw you out of India.” He offers no solution to the problem. His answer is : “ You stole India, you must suffer the consequences.”

When the Indian student comes to London he is well educated. His brain is quicker in the uptake than that of his British prototype. He is more mature for his years. Outwardly he seems as English as the English. In reality a deep unseen rift lies there.

The problems that face an Indian student in this country are tremendous. He has to start adjusting

his ideas all over again. First of all he notices the change in the English at home and abroad. In Delhi, Quetta, and Madras he has met English people by the score, thinks he understands them, but overlooks the fact that the D.F.O. and the bank clerk he meets in the Piccadilly tube are as far removed as are Aden and Tooting. The Indian student knows only the *pukka sahib* class (ill-used words as they are). He knows the Englishmen who know Indians, and not the Englishmen who do not know them. He knows the Englishman as the man who is frightened of nothing, lover of horses and sport ; on the whole, just and fair, white to the back teeth, and very definitely the overlord.

In London he finds a very different proposition. He mixes with the middle-class young men, finds that many of them have never been further afield than an organized tour to Switzerland, have never been on a horse (let alone heard of its stifles). He finds that they have probably got socialistic tendencies and express the opinion that every child is equal, whether the squalling brat is khaki-coloured and sired by a Caucasian garbage collector or a noble scion of some lord of the Shires who enters this world through the medium of four midwives and the setting of a stately castle, and whose blood is as blue as a ripe mulberry.

These expressions of modern youth are apt to react like a kick in the pants to the Indian student. He thinks that they are true, even believes his British confrere's expressions on 'free love'—until the said Indian student takes the said modern youth's typist girl-friend home to his flat one evening. Then he discovers that his white friend apparently does not mean what he says, and as a result of the angry scene that ensues starts learning about the habits of the Londoner at home all over again.

Let us examine the life of an Indian student in this country. He has come to take classes in some branch of learning, to pass examinations, and to go home the complete scholar, fitted for a brilliant career.

He comes down the gangway at Tilbury and sees before him the damp, drab, fog-bound outline of the greatest city in the world. A student already in London has arranged rooms for him—Hampstead, Maida Vale, no-man's-land between Holborn and King's Cross—it does not matter. Our Indian friend's first idea is to make himself look English. That is an art that takes some knowing, and he is apt to fail abysmally at the first attempt. He visits a vast emporium of men's outfitters, purchases the lightest pair of flannel trousers they have in stock, the most atrocious so-called 'sports jacket,' suede shoes, and multi-coloured scarf.

Looking about as British as a witch-doctor of the Fijis, he strolls down Piccadilly with an assumed independent air. Exploring St. James's he sees *pukka sahibs* in their Savile Row suits and their unmistakable tiffin air, and notices he is just as far from them here as ever he was in India.

At home in his 'digs' he finds that he mixes with a class of people who have no connection whatsoever with empire building, and care less about it. Perhaps he thinks that the caste system here is set up just as strongly as it is in India. A few days only suffice to break his illusions about the hard-hitting, long-legged Englishman.

In his dingy digs, decorated with aspidistras, two-ply walls, and an evil-smelling basement, he finds a motley and spotty-faced collection of humanity. It is probable that these include a dark-haired, red-flagged British student whose one aim in life is to take a trip to Russia, whose favourite pastime is drinking too much at the local beer-house and who,



on three half-bitters, has to be restrained from marching round Russell Square singing the 'Internationale,' armed with a dustbin lid to protect himself from the attacks of the cruel rich. Very edifying to Indian student.

Another inmate of the house in which he lives may be a young lady with dark glasses and hair cut round her neck as if by a pudding basin, who draws pictures for advertisements (sometimes) and who reads Karl Marx in bed—when she is alone. Very edifying to Indian student.

Other occupants have probably been expelled from Germany owing to an unfortunate line of ancestors, or have been forced out of the Balkans because the newspapers there don't pay enough to provide a living.

The Indian student may realize that he is bobbing about in a stagnant backwater, but he also realizes that such a backwater gives him a more cheerful reception than he would receive elsewhere. If, for instance, he ventures as far afield as Ealing, he may notice that he is the cause of a small stir, not perhaps as much as would make Mrs. Brown call across to her neighbour: 'Mrs. 'Icks, there's a Hindian,' but at the same time noticeable enough when the assistant manager's secretary at the Colossal Insurance Company crosses the road when she sees him coming up the empty avenue. He may also notice that, for some unaccountable reason, he is the only person with a seat to himself on the top of a bus, and that as shadows fall, aged spinsters in his proximity catch other aged spinsters' arms and hurry home. To that he prefers the scum in the backwater.

Altogether, London gives the Indian student a very bad attack of inferiority complex and, as often happens, even with the English, this develops into an attack of assumed superiority complex.

Take women, for example. There was a certain

student in London, for two years, who, to his landlady's great chagrin, cut a hundred and forty notches on his bed-post. Each of these, the student boasted, represented the visit of some white woman. So loud and long did he boast about his notched bedstead that eventually two commercial travellers from Lancashire presented him with a perfectly hideous piece of sculpture. With it was a notice bearing the words: 'In memory of Those who Fell, 1929-1931.' But he was not merely prepared to stop at the fantastic number of 140. He would tell, in bated whispers, of the midnight visits of famous stars of stage and screen, openly libelling Britain's most talented actresses. He got into trouble and the story came out.

The sex problem of Indian students in London is a very pressing one. Accustomed for generations to early marriage, the Indian boy of eighteen to twenty-two is sexually many years in advance of his European brother. The students usually adopt the easy way out and associate with women of very evil repute. But in the sexual field the Indian finds himself in possession of one trump card, for a certain percentage of otherwise normal girls are apt to lose their heads over Indians. It is the old, old story of the Arab sheikh dished up another way. This form of abnormality has sometimes led English girls into marriage with Indians, and often, as can only be expected, into a living hell for both. They have tried to defy nature, and that is the one thing that even twentieth-century folk cannot do.

To show the attitude of Indians towards women, bred in them through centuries, the following anecdote is told.

An English girl in search of a thrill had made friends with a party of four Indian students. She went to the pictures with them, suggested afterwards they went on and made a night of it. But two of the

Indians thought otherwise, and said they were going home. Their companions, rather grudgingly, went with them. The girl would not be shaken off and followed them home. When they reached the door of their lodging-house the girl suggested that she should come in and that they should have a party. One of the Indians said no. He wanted to go to sleep, and was very definite about it. But the girl insisted and clung to their arms, imagining in her innocence that Indians and Englishmen were really much alike. She was soon to learn otherwise, for the Indian hit her under the chin, knocking her down on to the pavement. The four students went into their house without a further word.

Another anecdote will illustrate the illusions that a girl can have about Indians, and the manner in which punishment is given when the latter discover they have been tricked.

A young typist had been out of a job for some time, and one night had met an Indian. He was wealthy and, combined with a certain amount of personal charm, he seemed a good 'catch' to the girl.

It must be remembered, of course, that the girl was out of work, and therefore willing to grasp at the last straw. In this case it was a fat one and, until it was grasped too firmly, supported her well.

These two, the Indian and the English typist, lived together in luxury at the Indian's apartments. Everything went well, until one night the girl made a slip.

She got tired of the Indian, decided she had had enough, and that after stealing his money she would leave him.

She crept into his room and attempted to take the thick wallet that lay upon his bedside table.

Now Indians sleep like cats and move like greased lightning. No sooner had the girl's hand touched

his wallet than it was seized in a vice-like grip. She screamed—and the fight was on.

Through her stupidity, callousness, and lack of knowledge of human nature, that girl might have lost her life. Luckily her screams roused the household and the Indian was dragged away. The student cannot altogether be blamed. He was acting as his father would have done towards a woman who betrayed.

The life to which the Indian is subjected in 'digs' naturally gives him a wrong impression of the true British character. The quiet home life and pleasant evenings that are spent in the majority of homes are unknown to him. He comes into contact with people with kinks and abnormalities, but seldom with peaceful family life.

Then there are difficulties with money. Centuries of Indian tradition are behind him here, the heritage of usurers and the common philosophy of the East. Drink, too, will catch and hold him.

If he goes to Oxford or Cambridge, he is known as a 'wog.' His skill in learning is obscured by the brilliance in the sporting field of the 'bloods,' perhaps the future *pukka sahibs*. He becomes a little-known, little-wanted inferior. The circles he frequents are not those of the sporting set, but the 'bookish.' He may become a rabid socialist, may just lie dormant in obscurity, but it is certain, whichever course he takes, that he cannot hope to leave the ancient seats of learning without a deep and, for some years ineradicable, mark of inferiority complex.

How the training and experience he has had in England work upon him to form another side to secret India I will show. The Indian student goes back to India—changed beyond all measure.

What must his feelings be as leaning against the rail of the home-bound liner he sees the outline of Bombay rise above the horizon? His mind is a

whirlpool, eddying with conflicting thoughts and ideas. The East has tried to meet the West and the recipe did not work. The result is a mess of pottage. Not always, of course, is the English experiment a failure. Many Indians go back from England and pass from success to success in their home country. But we are concerned with 'Secret India,' and therefore with those students who are failures. And the discontented, jobless student who returns to India from England is the most dangerous character with whom the authorities have to deal, for this young man is armed with more dangerous weapons than revolvers, knives, even bombs. He carries with him always the dangerous weapon of education.

All of us have met, in book or film, the anglicized Indian master-crook. The British hero, caught out in his death-defying mission to put paid to the villain's piece, is captured by the gang and dragged, bound, before the master.

You know the words :

"How do you do, Carruthers? What an unexpected meeting. I expect you remember me, only vaguely of course, for you were a Blue and I, well, I was just a 'wog.' But we were at Elijah College way back in '24. Goodness, how time passes. Surprised to see me, I expect? I am afraid that my hospitality can only be but crude, but please make yourself at home. To-night, perhaps, you will honour me for dinner. I have some excellent hock. And afterwards we might discuss the question of the plans."

Hero (*hissing*) : "Swine. You will suffer for this. You blackmailer."

Villain : "Hush, my dear Carruthers. That is an ugly word. No, just a little business deal, I assure you."

And so on, through to the anti-climax.

Makes very entertaining material when you are bored with the daily routine and spring one and sixpence for a seat in the local picture-house. Of course, you think it's all nonsense. There are not really people like that.

Do not be quite so sure. There is no smoke where there is not fire and truth is often stranger than fiction.

A student is standing on the deck of the liner approaching Bombay. Let us look into his mind. He is travelling over the same waters that he left two short years before. To him a decade has passed. He sees himself again as he was then. He was sailing into a wonderful dawn, from which he would return, the perfect scholar and business man, fit to be accepted in the clubs of the English, ready to carve a brilliant career. One by one his illusions were smashed. His crowning blow was his failure in the examinations. He is returning to India empty-pocketed and empty-handed. His family starved and scraped to send him to England. There will be no return on that money.

There will be the problem of explaining his failure to his family and friends ; not too easy.

His mind is so full of many things. He hates the English because they will not accept him as one of themselves, and because he has failed in his examination. He has been turned into a half-breed, made up of the two bad halves.

What jobs are open to him in India ? None that offers a full return for the money and work outlaid.

That is why, when a seditious gentleman comes along and tells him what a martyr he is, the student pricks up his ears. *So his job becomes anarchism. For this he is perfectly qualified. The qualifications being : (a) a hatred of the British, and (b) a knowledge of the English and their ways, learnt at first hand.*

## MYSTERIOUS INDIA

He finds that success in this line of business comes to him quickly, and he becomes one of the key men in the terrorist business.

His cunning has been supplemented. He would probably have been a crook anyhow, but now, thanks to the English, he is a super-crook.

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